Pacified Inclusion:

Security Policy, Social Networks, and Rio de Janeiro's *Favelas*

Jason Bartholomew Scott

Ph.D. Candidate

Department of Anthropology

University of Colorado-Boulder

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Donna Goldstein

Kaifa Roland

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Dissertation Abstract

This dissertation addresses the connections between everyday violence and digital technology. I describe three years of ethnographic research concerning a community policing program called "*pacificação*" (pacification) in a Brazilian *favela* (shanty town). Alongside supporting a permanent police force that destabilized a powerful drug faction, pacification policy endorsed a wide range of social projects and dramatically reshaped the relationship between the Brazilian State and its marginalized citizens. Among the social projects associated with pacification were a number of "*inclusão digital"* (digital inclusion) programs that combined technical literacy with critical political literacy in the hope of disrupting exclusionary conditions. During my observations of these programs, I found what I call a hidden politics of digital reproduction. Rather than disrupting the pacified favela's social conditions, as proponents of digital inclusion suggested, technology disguised and reproduced longstanding forms of oppression. I recount several examples of digital inclusion's hidden politics including technology corporations that used a discourse of disruption to promote middleclass consumerism in the favela and police who appropriated the rhetoric of social media activist to distract from human rights abuses. In considering these hidden politics of digital reproduction, my theoretical discussion informs anthropological scholarship concerning violence, a modern information society, and democracy in marginalized urban communities.

Dedication

Seventy-four residents of the Complexo were killed during shootouts over the course my research. These deaths include mothers, fathers, taxi-drivers, and students. For many, neighbors only knew the nickname of the dead. Others were teenage drug traffickers who police could not identify. My friend, Betinho Casas Novas, recorded their names: Gabriel Ferreira Carvalho, Lucas Gustavo da Silva Lourenço, Dalva Arlindo de Assis, Caio Moraes da Silva, Catia Valeria Borges Alves, Antonio França, Matheus Alexandre Silva dos Santos, Anderson de Souza, Alexandre Dias, Marcus Helleno, Adriano Leite, Cesinha, Felipe, "Magrinho", Rafael Coelho da Costa, Dona Emilia, Andre Luiz, Fernando Anselmo, Pessoa "Não Identificado", Lucas Soares, Vanessa Abcassis dos Santos, Felipe Passos, Elizabeth de Moura Francisco, Rodrigo "Farinha", Matheus Gomes Lima, Eduardo de Jesus Ferreira, Ramires Alencar, Jackson 'Paulista', Josimar Oliveira da Silva, "Não Identificado, "Não Identificado", Wellington Marcelino, Fábio Monteiro, Matheus "Charope", "Meia Noite", Pedro Henrique, Deyverson Avelino, Patrick da Silva de Souza, Carla Cristina Silva, Junior Santos, Ygor Quirino Lope, Emerson Tadeu Alvino, Aguinaldo José de Nascimento, Rafael Oliveira, Elaine Cristina, Ângelo de Oliveira Pereira, Roseli de Jesus, Edvan Melo dos Santos, Zé Bideu, Wallace Martins, Darlene da Silva Gonçalve, Babuino Luan, Davidson, Emerson Davi, "Não Identificado", Leandro Motta Soares, "Não Identificado", "Não Identificado", Nilza "Tia Neném", "Desconhecido", "Desconhecido", "Desconhecido", Vinicius Freire, "Traficante Sem ID", "Traficante Sem ID", "Traficante Sem ID", Ibra, "Traficante Sem ID", Luiz Fernando de Jesus Melo, Gustavo de Souza, Bruno Silva, "Não identificado: Traficante", Paulo Henrique de Oliveira, Felipe Farias, and Marinete Menezes Berto, and Kizumba. Alongside these names, there were an equal number of residents wounded by gunfire. The

youngest victim was three years old and the oldest was seventy-eight years old. To borrow a phrase from the Complexo's activist community, these individuals are "*presente*" (present) throughout my research.

Acknowledgements

I thank the numerous NGOs and activists who offered me a critical space to observe Brazil. The Complexo-based NGOs Oca dos Curumins, Voz das Comunidade, and Raiz em Movimento were particularly central to my research. As a gringo from the Midwest United States, daily life in the Complexo often felt isolating. These NGOs and their members invited me into their lives and made me feel at home. Outside of the Complexo, the Committee for Digital Inclusion put me in touch with hundreds of Brazilians and international collaborators including street level activists in rural Brazil and multinational corporations. O Colectivo Digital, a São Paulo based NGO, wrote letters of support for me to government institutions and universities on two continents and in two languages. There were also dozens of other NGOs, both large and small, that opened their doors to me over the course of my research. I support their goals and hope that the world is positively changed by their vision.

Countless teachers guided me through this research. Donna Goldstein inspired me to find humor in a grim place and showed me how to read the world. Rosemary Segurado gave me a chance to present my work to the Brazilian academy by writing letters of support and offering her classroom for me to present my research. My doctoral committee, including Carole McGranahan, Kaifa Roland, Rob Buffington, and Andrew Calabrese, gave me much needed notes.

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sustained my first month of preliminary research. Graduate Teacher Program employed me, guided me professionally, and offered essential peer support while I was in Boulder.

Family and friends gave me comfort during a demanding time of my life, where I relocated at least ten times in as many years and found myself challenged both professionally and spiritually. Maria Ramos opened her home to me and traveled long hours by city bus every few days to make sure I felt safe. Her love has been a constant throughout this project. There were also a number of individuals who put a roof over my head. When making monthly trip to São Paulo to meet with NGOs and academics, Lais Manzalli honored a standing invitation for me to sleep on her couch. Two hostels, LimeTime and Lisetonga, also gave me weeks of free room and board while I looked for my path off from the gringo trail. My mother and father allowed me to live with them while I waited for Brazil's complex bureaucracy to deliver a string of research visas.

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Introduction

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This dissertation looks at the relationship between digital technology and security policy in marginalized communities. I describe a group of social media activists from a *favela* (shantytown) in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, named the Complexo do Alemão. I carried out three years of ethnographic research during a time in which the Complexo was known as Rio's most violent and impoverished *favela* (2014–2016). Brazil's federal government had recently installed a community policing policy called *pacificação* (pacification) that destabilized the Complexo's imperialistic drug gang, formalized a largely informal economy, and expanded social infrastructure. *Inclusão digital* (digital inclusion) projects played a notable role in the Complexo's *pacificação*. A vanguard of online activists received backing from multinational corporations, international NGOs, and government ministries, acting as examples of digitally-included citizens who could connect a pacified *favela* with a global network society. Through ethnographic observation, I found that the disruptive and utopic potentials of digital technology in a pacified Complexo were constrained by a "hidden politics", both in terms of the violent social conditions that influenced these programs and the contradictory social systems that emerged as the programs matured.

This dissertation describes a pacified form of inclusion that places a violent security policy with hopes for digital democracy in the same social space. The Complexo's case of pacified inclusion demonstrates the reproductive power of supposedly disruptive technologies. Throughout my dissertation I will return to a set of central questions: What can the Complexo's experiences reveal about technocratic policies that seek to mitigate structural violence? How

does digital inclusion align with the goals of pacification? And, what are the aspirations, potentials, and limitations of digital inclusion in marginalized communities? In my response to these questions I will argue that digital inclusion in pacified *favelas*, while disruptive and participatory, reproduces the alienated authority of dominant institutions.

Langdon Winner's description of political artifacts plays a central role in my discussion of digital inclusion in the *favela*. Winner (1981) argues that technology has inherently political properties and helps to "settle" (ibid., 123) contentious social debates. While not the case for all artifacts, some technologies are specifically designed to create relationships of power and authority. Often these designs are shaped by a hidden and unpronounced agenda or obscured by more dramatic social beliefs. Winner's most noteworthy example, low hanging bridges that prevent public buses and their working class urban riders from accessing rural parkways, demonstrates that even the most banal of infrastructural technologies can support political agendas. Considering Winner's sense of politics, this dissertation looks for the low hanging bridges of the favela's information super highway. Specifically, I seek to understand what forms of oppression become hidden by a discourse of digital inclusion, digital disruption, and information utopia in pacified favelas.

Throughout my dissertation, I return to a set of scholarly ideas to help uncover the hidden politics of digital reproduction in the Complexo do Alemão. The Complexo plays a peripheral role in what Manual Castells' calls a network society in that information, and not physical commodities, defines many of the community's socio-economic arrangements (Castells 1997). I see the process of digital reproduction, à la Walter Benjamin's mechanical reproduction (1937), assigning a constantly evolving aura of authority to images of violence created by the

Complexo's activist community. I also suggest that "structural violence", or historical forms of human suffering caused by social institutions, is often reproduced by the Complexo's network society (Farmer 1996). In a moment of cautious hope, I refer to Paulo Freire's critical pedagogy (1973), where technical literacy provides a gateway to political thought, in order to describe how favela residents leverage digital technology to resist structural and everyday violence. Through an ethnographic discussion of the Complexo, I hope to demonstrate how a popular narrative of digital inclusion and disruption hides many of the more problematic contradictions of a "pacified" network society.

The Voice of a Community

No individual demonstrated the most recent social changes in the Complexo more than Rene Silva Santos. The day the Complexo was pacified in 2010, Rene—a 17-year-old editor of the neighborhood newsletter *Voz da Comunidades* (*Voice of the Communities*)—watched 3,000 police storm his *favela* with armored vehicles and Vietnam-era helicopters. Police arrested dozens of drug traffickers, uncovered a metric tons of illegal narcotics, and discovered an arsenal of military-grade small arms. Rene sat at his bedroom window and posted emotional updates to his followers on Twitter. One of Rene's tweets read, "*os traficantes jogaram uma granada nos policiais!!! tenso*" ("the traffickers threw a grenade at the police!!! tense").

Rene's online coverage of pacification diverged dramatically from more traditional media outlets who watched the events from a physical and social distance. Many who followed the Complexo's pacification live on television and watched images recorded by news-helicopters that hovered slightly above military helicopters. Reporters on the ground donned bulletproof vests but stood behind police checkpoints and only entered the community after

authorities declared an all clear. Rene contrasted with these perspectives and used digital technology to share an intimate portrait of the security crisis consuming his community.

Educators, social justice activists, politicians, and journalists, a set of like-minded individuals who had already embraced the disruptive potentials of digital technology, took notice of Rene's tweets. He was immediately praised as an example of a democratic counter-narrative that was made possible by the removal of drug gangs and by the increased institutional support of *favela* perspectives through digital inclusion. Beyond the representational power of his tweets, Rene embodied pacification policy's goal of uniting a diverse group of actors that included the police, middleclass development workers, and shantytown residents. Just days after pacification, Rene gained tens of thousands of followers on social media. In the months that followed, he received international awards and corporate sponsorships. As the years passed, Rene carried the Olympic torch and gave talks at Ivy League universities. He even inspired a main character on the second-most-watched telenovela in Brazilian history, "Salve Jorge", and consulted on *favela* issues for Brazil's largest television network. Within the Complexo, Rene partnered with local NGOs and garnered a celebrity status among the community's youth. Connecting much of the praise surrounding Rene was the belief that he symbolized the social possibilities of pacification and digital inclusion in the Complexo do Alemão.

Despite the promising possibilities to follow the arrival of a permanent police force, many residents, including Rene, became suspicious of the inclusionary promises that outsiders had promoted in the Complexo after pacification. As pacification policy matured, police and NGOs revealed a "bad faith" behind their efforts to include the Complexo in Brazil's democratic

state by supporting individuals like Rene (Scheper-Hughes 1993). I arrived in the Complexo a little more than four years after the Complexo's pacification, a point at which the ideal of peace and security had begun to give way to increased violence. The week I moved in, drug traffickers shot a police officer in the stomach a hundred meters from my home. Following the shooting, police intensified their prohibition against public gatherings and escalated the pace of warrantless house-to-house searches. Soon after, NGOs, politicians, and businesses began to withdraw their support from social projects in the community and cited violent threats to their middleclass employees. Residents called out policymakers and police for abandoning their promises of community-oriented development once street-level violence returned to pre-pacification levels. Police spokesmen deflected from the mounting number of innocent civilian deaths by reminding critics of the threats to their officers and the moral certainty of a fight against criminal drug factions. Police commanders argued that their officers were also made victims by pacification policy and promised to take the steps necessary to insure public safety. By the end of my three years of research, armored police vehicles were a common sight around the Complexo, and Rio's security officials contemplated sending in national army troops to bolster the effectiveness of police operations in the community. While not completely abandoned, pacification policy was effectively stalled.

The breakdown of the community-oriented promises of pacification policy became the primary means by which Complexo residents experienced the disruptive potentials of digital technology. My research focuses on residents of the Complexo, like Rene, who benefited from the inclusionary promises of digital technology but were subject to the exclusionary nature of violence in the community. While a vanguard of activists drew attention to violence through

online posts and, in turn, became noteworthy social actors, this use of digital technology was unable to disrupt the reproduction of violence under pacification policy. Rather than being able to disrupt the community's more entrenched forms of suffering, such as generational poverty and social stigma, activists found themselves wrestling with street-level violence perpetrated by an exclusionary police force that had originally promised them a critical voice.

Pacification and Digital Inclusion

Throughout this dissertation I will provide examples of how the concepts of pacification and digital inclusion intersect. These ideas—although usually used to define separate social, economic, and political phenomena—share a number of practical and philosophical qualities when applied to Brazil and the Complexo. Both are polysemous terms, with literal meanings suggested by authoritative state actors, and more critical meanings adopted by *favela* residents (Barthes 1964). Both terms describe efforts to include marginalized actors in a formal economic and political system. Both encompass the goals of powerful institutions that seek to gain influence in the *favela*. And both pacification and digital inclusion imply that there is a practical means by which to achieve an equal democracy in an historically marginalized community. Over the course of my ethnography, I will return to key moments when pacification and digital inclusion intersect to explain the conditions under which favela residents experience the state.

I apply the word "pacified"(*pacificado* in Portuguese) to a variety of concepts: i.e., pacified *favela*, pacified state, and pacified citizenship. The concept of pacification allows me to describe the ways that institutions engage *favela* citizens through democratically informed military and social projects. This type of institutional engagement is nothing new. Historically, the term pacification was invoked by colonial and neo-colonial states to describe civilizing and formalizing projects that enforced a Western style of governance and opposed the governing

principles created by indigenous communities. Among dozens of antecedents, pacification has been a part of Britain's assimilation of tribes in colonial Afghanistan (Tripoli 2009), the U.S. occupation of Spanish Cuba (Perez 1986), the genocide of indigenous peoples in Brazil and the United States (Langfur 1999; Oakdale 2008), the occupation of villages in Vietnam by the U.S. in the 1960s (Duncanson 1967), and, most recently, the use of social scientists by the U.S. military in the Middle East (Gonzalez 2009). In each case, a dominant state made calls for peaceful inclusion of peripheral communities yet threatened a degree of violence as a means to achieve social integration. Pacification presupposes an authoritative order, social progress, the expansion of capitalist markets, and a modernistic mastery of human potential. It is important to note that Rio's *favela* pacification efforts mirrored these historic examples of pacification in that peace, or the secession of violent conflict, was often implied but rarely achieved (Diehl et al. 1998). Rather, pacifying forces declared a moral victory for a dominant nation-state and praised the socio-political acculturation of marginalized communities.

The underlying political ambitions of Rio's pacification policy embrace what Veena Das and Debora Poole (2004, 8) describe as the state's constant re-interpretation of order and legality at its margins (see also Kernaghan 2015). For much of the Complexo's 75-year history, the Brazilian State attempted to govern through "strategic absence," disregarding the *favela*'s physical infrastructure needs such as fixed police stations, health clinics, roads, and banks (Rose 1996). The socio-economic conditions of the *favela* partially reflected what João Biehl (2005) calls a "zone of social abandonment" where human rights are systematically denied and undesirable individuals are forsaken by neoliberal de-institutionalization. Pacification policy, in part, was the Brazilian State's attempt to correct a history of social abandonment. Reflecting

what James Scott (1998) calls "seeing like a state," pacification policy made the *favela* legible, not only as a legal territory on a map of Rio de Janeiro, but also as a cultural, political, and social space within a sovereign Brazilian State.

What marked this pacification effort as different from earlier colonial and imperial efforts was the *favela*'s relationship with illegal narcotics. *Favelas* evolved informally and ostensibly outside the formal rule of law. This lawlessness gave rise to a parallel state empowered by the sale of cocaine. In the decades before pacification, deadly inter-gang wars were common and shut down Rio for days on end. As Ben Penglase (2009, 47) explains, "state and non-state actors [became] co-participants in the creation of a state of (in)security whose effects shape[d] daily life throughout the city of Rio de Janeiro." Eliminating the *favela*'s parallel state became a central focus of many politicians and policymakers.

Police and corporate journalists frequently described pacification policy as a *retomada* (retaking) of the community for Brazilian society. From its inception in 2008, policymakers discussed pacification as a historic conquest with a goal of destabilizing *tráfico de drogas* (drug traffic). In order to achieve this goal, pacification policy created the UPP (*Unidade de Policia Pacificador*, or Pacification Police Unit), a specially-trained police force independent of Rio's military police that was believed to be resistant to corruption and better suited to address the needs of the *favela*. The *UPP Social*—later changed to *Rio+Social* because of a negative association with its martial counterpart—was established to guide social programs and economic development. Billions of dollars were spent on *favela* development by every level of government in Brazil (federal, state, and municipal) as well as institutions in civil society (e.g., private citizens, multinational corporations, and foreign governments). Thousands of *favela*

residents were hired by the government to build roads, sewers, and electrical lines. Thousands more were trained as nurses, teachers, and social workers. Within the first months of pacification, crime rates within and around the Complexo equaled rates in Brazil's wealthiest and most secure neighborhoods. After watching the policy's immediate results, politicians, journalists, and international observers alike praised *pacificação* as an unparalleled victory for urban policing.

Despite these positive effects, most Complexo residents that I spoke with were critical of pacification policy. They saw *pacificação* as a form of *maquiagem* (cosmetics) that disguised the state's exclusionary past and possibly oppressive futures in the *favela*. Residents were quick to mention that their critique of pacification policy did not mean support for drug gangs or opposition to the efforts to make the Complexo more secure. Rather, while corporate media often depicted the *favela* and its residents as preferring gangs over the police, by the government's own estimate no more than one percent of the Complexo participated in the drug trade before pacification. In fact, most *favela* residents that I spoke with supported neither the drug gangs nor the police. Residents believed that pacification policy intensified the violent authority of the police and caused uncertainty over the nature of street violence. These more critical residents hoped for peace or the cessation of violence, but felt that neither the UPP nor the resilient drug factions were willing to end decades-old hostilities.

Unlike their stance regarding pacification policy, my informants rarely problematized digital inclusion and saw it as a necessity for the modern world. Much like pacification, digital inclusion is a concept with nebulous meanings, often presented by activists, academics, bureaucrats, and corporations alike as a solution to the Complexo's socio-economic problems.

At the end of the twentieth century, digital technology became a ubiquitous cultural object within the *favela* and was embraced by activists and residents as a platform for challenging structural inequality. Because of material, economic, and educational barriers, early digital inclusion efforts in the *favela* were often limited to *lan houses* (Internet cafes), computer labs hosted by NGOs, and inexpensive computers donated to students by ambitious international charities. The growing availability of consumer mobile technologies—such as Internet-ready smart phones—in the first decade of the twenty-first century changed the goal of many digital inclusion programs from providing basic access through computer labs to encouraging a politically informed use of personal technologies.

By the start of my research in the Complexo, digital technology was relatively ubiquitous, with over half of residents and 80% of young residents having daily access to the Internet (Solos Culturais 2013). Most used digital technology for entertainment and socializing in the form of online gaming, social networking, and listening to music. By 2015, thirteen programs in the Complexo promoted digital inclusion, with content ranging from introductory computer courses to professional-level video production. These programs hoped to build on a generation's embrace of technology and refashion Internet usage into a critical experience rather than a mere consumer activity.

Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1971) provided a common pedagogical framework for many of the digital inclusion programs in the Complexo. Freire is one of Brazil's best known philosophers. Freire's ideas are often introduced to Brazil's public-school children at an early age and authoritarian politicians often bemoan the effectiveness of his methodologies at inspiring critical perspectives among marginalized communities that

challenge an oppressive status quo. Under Freire's critical pedagogy, individuals learn to "read" through the technical aspects of literacy, and to "read the world" by using literacy to understand oppression in their lives. Freire's teachings held a particular salience in the Complexo. When the Complexo was pacified in 2010, the government estimated that only 92% of the community was functionally literate (UPP 2011). Years later, while I carried out interviews for my research, a high school teacher from the community told me that many residents "can't read a book. They can read a cookbook, maybe, but they can't read the news in a newspaper."(Author's Field Notes March 2014). The teacher implied that, while the Complexo's residents had the ability to translate text into words, they often lacked the ability and the desire to use literacy for political critique. Inspired by Freire's critical pedagogy, activists in the Complexo repurposed *traditional* concepts of literacy to describe their goals for *digital* literacy in a hope of supplementing problematic education disparities. As I discuss later in this dissertation, a combined focus on digital and critical literacies produced a hundred-strong cohort of young social media activists who were trained in using technology as a political tool.

Ethnography of Contradictions

Because digital inclusion activists and the state's initial desires to market pacification as a form of progress, the Complexo's violence became highly visible. Attempting to make sense of this violence, outside observers often associated pacification and digital inclusion with global examples of community policing and the information revolution. Scholars, journalists, and activists most frequently tied pacification policy to Rio's hosting of the 2014 World Cup and 2016 Olympics (Steinbrink 2013; Freeman 2014). In the lead-up to these mega-events, Brazil's elites sought to present Rio as an ascendant global city, a success story for a nation long

struggling with arrested social, political, and economic development. Public spending on social, infrastructural, and security projects in Rio de Janeiro were at an all-time high when pacification policy was implemented in the Complexo. Olympic organizers highlighted efforts to integrate Rio's thousand-plus *favelas* into the formal fabric of the city. Critics drew parallels to Olympic games in previous host cities where forced evictions, political corruption, and wasted public money overshadowed an inclusionary discourse. As a result of this discussion, *favela* activists drew greater attention from newsmakers who compared their situation with forced evictions during the 2010 World Cup in South Africa and the 2008 Olympics in Beijing. The increased visibility worked on a feedback loop and allowed both journalists and activists to promote the inclusionary power of social media technology.

As an ethnographer who lived in one of the most discussed *favelas* in Rio de Janeiro, I found this globalizing narrative, which associates pacification so closely with the Olympics, to be both accurate and problematic. Indeed, the Olympics provided the catalyst for a number of changes in the *favela* (such as gentrification, securitization, and "NGO-ification") that may have happened differently without the games. However, I also believe that pacification and digital inclusion would have taken place without any particular mega-event, given Brazil's governing and highly inclusive Worker's Party, and a Brazilian economy that was in the middle of a ten-year boom. Furthermore, the Olympics often flavored my conversations with Brazilians but were rarely described as the direct cause of pacification. Rather than focusing on these more global narratives of digital disruption and pacification, my informants often discussed the changes in their community in terms of historical reproduction and the repetition of state-

centric oppression. They believed that pacification was part of an unending effort to marginalize the *favela* through oppressive force and socio-economic segregation.

At the time of my research, the Complexo was Rio de Janeiro's poorest and, arguably, most violent community. The Complexo had Rio's lowest literacy rate, life expectancy, and rate of employment. Rates of disease, developmental problems, psychological trauma, and substance abuse were higher in the Complexo than in any other part of Rio. While the Human Development Index (HDI) of some of Rio's neighborhoods like Ipanema and Copacabana compared to that of countries such as Norway and Switzerland, the Complexo's HDI was the city's lowest and closer to those of Suriname and the Dominican Republic (Balza 2010). On average, Rio's *favelas* earned R$12.3 billion (around US$4.1 billion) annually with an average salary of R$965 (around US$321) per month (ibid). This wage, just above Brazil's minimum wage (*salário mínimo*), left little for the purchase of consumer goods, healthcare, education, clothing, travel, and food once a household pays rent for a home in a pacified *favela* that can often exceed R$1000 a month. According to Brazil's 2010 census (Censo I.B.G.E. 2011), fifty-two percent of *favela* residents reported going hungry some nights (*passaram fome*). Three percent of Rio's *favela* residents had less than four years of formal education (*não são instruidas*), and only 27% finished high school (*ensino meio*) (ibid). The vast plurality of Complexo residents are non-white, and 84% of *favela* residents claim to be victims of prejudice because of their skin color (Teixeira 2015). These demographic features suggest that digital technology in pacified *favelas* was inspired by a web of inequalities that existed long before the arrival of neoliberal markets and Olympic committees in Rio de Janeiro.

With growing government coffers and a political system that appeared increasingly representative of Brazil's marginalized, digital inclusion in pacified *favelas* had a governmentalizing effect that encouraged a wide range of new socio-economic practices while maintaining the hierarchical supremacy of Brazil's dominant state (O'Neill 1986, 51). My research produced hundreds of examples where representatives of the state or civil society preached the benefits of middleclass lifestyles and social beliefs to residents, which favela residents then embraced and internalized. As I describe in later chapters, I met a drug dealer who became a Microsoft spokesman, middleclass digital activists who challenged segregation by sharing a social space with *favela* residents for the first time, and young activists from the *favela* who drew the attention of politicians and international charities. Their stories highlight how the state sought to redesign the narrative about marginality in Rio by encouraging among the marginalized a set of socio-economic practices deemed acceptable by a dominant society.

As I continue this dissertation, I will discuss how being both "pacified" and "included" presents several ideological contradictions. In a broad political sense, inclusion assumes democracy and liberal market processes while pacification assumes acquiescence to an oppressive form of dominant authority. Local NGOs like Rene's *Voz das Comunidades*, mentioned at the start of this introduction, became intermediaries between a dominant state and the *favela*, but struggled to sustain their movement outside the *favela* without the direct and indirect financial support of multinational corporations. The political and security actors that could guarantee democratic change—namely pacification police—appeared to institutionally ignore local critique. But, rather than respecting the opinions of the community and giving more institutional power to people from the *favela*, this version of inclusion

celebrated marginality only to later appropriate oppressed voices. The *favela*'s power of representation transformed into political and economic value through arrangements like corporate sponsorships and political patronage. Each example that I discuss demonstrates a similar type of political appropriation, insincerity on the part of the state, and the limitations created by continued violence.

Contradictions like those that I witnessed in the pacified Complexo are central to anthropological critique and ethnographic observation. Claude Lévi-Strauss (1978) believes that binary meanings are fundamental to human logic. By establishing, distorting, and combining binaries, Lévi-Strauss contends that humans are able to make the logically impossible seem possible. Later anthropologists discussed how former colonial subjects reconciled the incommensurability between the image of colonial others made by Lévi-Strauss's contemporaries and the lived experiences of individuals existing under an oppressive post-colonialism (Bhabha 1989). In this sense, dominant representations are often understood by marginalized communities as locally inauthentic but globally legitimate social facts that they must negotiate. Along a similar vein, James Ferguson (1991) discussed the "anti-politics machine" that emerges from de-politicized neoliberal development projects. Ferguson claims that, through the inclusion of the political and social periphery, and the simultaneous elimination of traditional local representation systems, the state increases authority over marginalized communities and, in turn, politicizes the non-political. These development projects help to localize global systems that run counter to more indigenous philosophies (Kearney 1995) and alternatives to the public sphere (Frazer 1993). Contemporary

anthropological approaches like the above can deconstruct problematic contradictions and embrace the representational authority of marginalized communities.

Similarly, ethnographies of Brazil's periphery tend to be defined by similar deconstructed contrasts and tensions. Oswaldo de Andrade (1928) and Levi-Strauss (1951) invoked the concept of anthropophagy or cannibalism to describe the development of Brazilian culture through the cultural appropriation and internalization of the indigenous other. These authors suggest that by "consuming" internal otherness, Brazilian culture has also been able to deconstruct, subvert, and appropriate foreign cultural practices. Gilberto Freyre (1933), possibly Brazil's most significant anthropologist, promoted a paradoxical understanding of racial democracy founded on the idea that the a colonial-era master and slave lived in an intimate peace, and this particular history of slavery influenced a tradition of racial harmony after abolition. Similarly, the majority of Brazilians, as Carl Degler (1971) states, are considered "neither black nor white"; their society embraces a spectrum of non-binary color categories that runs counter to the U.S. racial lens. In this sense, Brazil contrasts with U.S. racial logics. While such post-racial optimism is being widely critiqued by modern scholars, the idea of a racial democracy continues to justify some of the more problematic on-the-ground denials of inequality in Brazil. Janice Perlman's (1973) ethnography challenges the "culture of poverty" hypothesis proposed by Oscar Lewis (1959) and framed marginalized urban communities as essential to the economic and cultural fabric of Rio despite claims that *favelas* were inherently separate from Brazil's dominant society. In contrast, Alba Zaluar (1999) contemplates the existence of drug-dealer parallel states that operated alongside and in contradiction to Brazil's formal state. Using the example of informal land rights movements in São Paulo's periphery,

James Holston (2007) outlines an insurgent citizenship that finds democratic rights through the breaking of the state's rules and regulations. Nancy Scheper-Hughes (1991) describes mother-love as a middleclass myth that is not afforded to mothers from the *favela* who must quietly suffer through the loss of a child. Donna Goldstein (2003) discusses how *favela* residents create humor from humiliation, oppression, and suffering. With these ethnographies in mind, I approached my ethnography of the Complexo in terms of several key contradictions: exclusive forms of inclusion, oppressive liberators, suffering through hope, and claiming peace amidst violent conflict.

Information technology also created additional incongruences in the Complexo: virtual against the real, local alongside global, and corporate against the collective. Like other online social movements that sprung up in the first decade of the twenty-first century, the Complexo's nascent digital vanguard mobilized to document and protest the abuse that resulted from pacification. Digital media reconfigures the relationship between protestors, the global media community, and urban space (Al Sayyad & Guvenc 2013). The anti-globalization movement that emerged as the result of the 2008 global economic crisis, often referred to as the Occupy Movement, depended on social media to decentralize a broader network of activists (Juris 2013). Viral social media content set the tone and organizational practices of local manifestations of Occupy (Postill 2013). The 2011 uprisings that spread across the Arab world sought democratic reform through collective protest that depended heavily on social media to organize a vast array of political movements and social causes. For the Arab Spring, as it was in the Complexo, online movements often oscillated between optimism and despair (Hamdy 2012). For example, digital media played an essential role when anti-government protests

erupted throughout Brazil in 2013 (D'Andrea 2014). Digital media gave a "creative spark"(D'Andrea 2014, 939) to a variety of activist movements, including those found in the Complexo, that sought to adapt a global anti-establishment discourse to local forms of oppression.

After observing these ideologies play out in a pacified Complexo, I am hesitant to embrace a broad optimism for digital revolution, just as I am cautious about the inclusionary potentials of pacification or the disruptive conditions of the Olympics. Working within existing political systems softened the goals of these movements and produced political arrangements in contradiction to what they set out to achieve. As was the case with the Complexo, the revolutionary promises of the Occupy Movement, for example, struggled in large part because of the non-revolutionary actions of its actors (Roberts 2012). Pacifism, the respect for property rights, and the adherence to the established neoliberal system of laws helped to maintain an oppressive status quo by leaving centers of governmental power relatively unscathed. Because of a de-centralized discourse, these movements often failed to develop a broader and sustained following among non-activists. The Arab Spring succeeded in removing established dictators but often saw the rise of new ones. By the end of my research in 2016, Brazil's anti-establishment movement transformed into a conservative populist moment that helped to impeach Brazil's socialist President Dilma Rouseff, dismantle her party's social programs, and intensify militarized policing programs in marginalized communities. In the Complexo, police and other institutions often promoted digital inclusion activists as a means to cover up the more problematic aspects of pacification policy. In every one of these examples, oppressive actors

appropriated the inclusionary discourse of an information revolution in order to reproduce an exclusionary political, economic, and social arrangement.

My ethnographic methods—participant observation, in-depth qualitative interviews, small-scale social media analysis, and visual documentation—revealed the contradiction of pacified inclusion across several conceptual and practical contexts. During much of my research, I lived in an NGO, the *Oca dos Curumins*, at the heart of the Complexo. As a blonde-haired, blue-eyed American, race, class, and my sense of risk were a constant reminder of my difference from a principally Afro-descendent and migrant community. My sense of difference made my experience with violence on social media shades different from the favela residents who I describe below. My familiarity with privilege also shaped the way I interpreted the events around me. However, despite my foreignness, sharing a space with my interlocutors exposed me to some of the more precarious aspects of everyday *favela* life and allowed me to witness how the community normalized violence in their lives. Ethnography provided countless examples of how *favela* life and, consequently, the *favela*'s digital space are based in the everyday expression of structural violence and how it is reproduced alongside digital technology.

Experiencing war alongside pacification and justifications for violence alongside calls for peace was the central contradiction of carrying out ethnographic research in the Complexo. When meeting me for the first time, many *favela* residents asked, "*Tá bravo aqui, ne?*" ("It's dangerous here, isn't it?"). I often responded dishonestly and told them that I had become used to the confusion. In reality, while I could walk freely around the dense and hilly alleyways of the Complexo, the specter of *guerra* (war), or more specifically the conflict between traffickers and

the Brazilian State, guided much of my movement. I learned to avoid areas where I knew there were police or drug dealers. Cases of injury by *bala perdida*, or stray bullet, were concentrated in these areas. Police and traffickers often occupied important commercial areas and thoroughfares, so I could not avoid these areas outright. I also could not avoid the sound of gunfire that rang through the community on most days. I often felt safer staying at home at the center of the Complexo than leaving the house and venturing to another part of the city. The informal development of the community produced innumerable dead ends and unmarked alleyways, many of which I felt I knew better than the trigger-happy police who were only individually stationed in the community for three months at a time. On days with pronounced conflict, Rio's public transportation services conspired against my neighbors and me. Bus routes were often altered to avoid spurts of violence in the Complexo. A newly built *teleférico* (cable car) system that hung over the Complexo was particularly exposed to stray bullets and was often closed down because of shootouts. Traveling out of the Complexo is difficult as well, as getting to Rio's wealthy neighborhoods or to its world-famous beaches requires three forms of public transportation and a two-hour trip. I met several teenagers from the community who, even having grown up in Rio de Janeiro, had never been to the beach. This isolation appeared to get worse over the course of my research. Local bus lines were eliminated in favor of rapid transit corridors between the World Cup and Olympic venues built kilometers from the Complexo. Taxi drivers refused to drive near the community for fear of violence, and most residents lacked personal transport. This meant that, even while it sat at heart of the Rio de Janeiro and an extensive transportation network, the Complexo became increasingly segregated from the broader city.

In addition to socioeconomic segregation and a chaotic security situation, there are more natural elements that make the Complexo feel physically isolated from the rest of Rio de Janeiro. The Serra de Misconcordia, a public nature reserve, borders the Complexo and hosts several mining quarries that pepper the air with a fine dust (Instituto Pereira Passos, 2005). Two enormous highways, a rail line, and Rio's rusting industrial district form an oblong hexagon that demark the Complexo's officially recognized boundaries. A heavy industrial smog rolls through the community during the morning rush hour and hangs in the air until the evening rush hour. On top of the pollution, the Complexo is statistically Rio's hottest neighborhood (Extra 2016). Many of the local health professionals who I spoke with believed that heat and pollution helped to give the Complexo Rio's highest rates of disease.

Despite the physical immobility and isolation produced by the Complexo's urban configuration, the Internet and social media gave me almost constant contact with the local community, and I was able to experience the type of physical and social isolation that a vanguard of digital activists sought to disrupt. While I was not engaged in a completely "virtual ethnography" meant to explore online textual practice, my research benefited from bridging the digital and a physical world of the Complexo (Hine 2000; Malaby 2012; Boellstorff 2013). Postill and Pink (2012, 2) describe a virtual ethnography as a process of "ethnographically [documenting] the (dis)continuities between the experienced realities of face-to-face and social media movement and socialities…they are not bounded territories or groups/communities. Rather they are clusters or intensities of things of which both localities and socialities are elements." I embraced a "multi-sited" ethnography that "followed connections, associations, and putative relationships" across digital and physical spaces instead of a singular person, place

or event (Marcus 1995). By following the intersection of digital inclusion, pacification, and marginality, I engaged a wide-ranging network of socio-economic backgrounds and institutional affiliations. Social media led me to particular nodes of the Complexo's activist network (e.g., activists groups, government institutions, and geographically-bound communities) and the individuals who inhabited them (e.g., activists, government workers, and neighborhoods). I interviewed over two hundred NGO workers, students, politicians, neighbors, traffickers, police, government workers, businessmen, drug traffickers, and ex-convicts, as well as self-fashioned social entrepreneurs. Many of my conversations with these individuals were open-ended and led to in-depth conversations about the nature of violence and the Internet. We discussed work, the development of personal political beliefs, the role of technology in individual lives, and how the Complexo fit into a broader society. Most interviews were held at the workplaces of my interlocutors.

My research also followed a tradition of digital ethnography that focuses on how a technology is designed and maintained (Coady 2011; Goldman 2008; Miller & Record 2013; Munn 2012; Turner 2013). As an ethnographic project, I sought a deeper understanding of the day-to-day use of digital technology in pacified *favelas*, and of how activist networks were organized and maintained. When I first visited the Complexo in 2010, digital devices such as smart phones, cameras, and, to a lesser extent, notebook computers were considered luxury goods. By the time I returned in 2014, most teenagers and adults owned a smartphone. Local activists depended on mobile digital media to document the Complexo's everyday dramas (e.g., death, birth, friendship, business, and crime) and broadcast these traumatic events to a broader world. Day-to-day conversations with my neighbors and friends in the *favela* allowed

me to gauge the gravity of online content as it related to everyday life in the *favela*. Without this street-level interaction, my virtual observations would have been limited in scope and quality, reproductive of a dominant narrative concerning the liberatory potentials of technology, and ultimately reifying of the Complexo's pacified inclusion. In a network society, such as the Complexo's emerging online public, the local value of engaging content (e.g., "liking," commenting, or sharing) can best be measured through its relation to other contexts, concepts, and content (Castells 1995). Online content that is shared by activists, for example, has a notable effect on the street level conversations in the Complexo. And, while a White American ethnographer like myself may not necessarily embody the *favela*'s content, grounded participant-observation helped me to bridge a conceptual gap between online and offline worlds.

Most in the Complexo believe that the world has ignored them, and that the Internet is the only way that the community will be recognized. Their principle goal, one that I embraced through my research, is to spread information about injustice in Rio's *favelas*. For this reason, I chose to go against the tradition of many previous anthropologists who altered the names of the *favelas* that they studied. The majority of individuals that I discuss will be given pseudonyms to protect their privacy, employment, and physical safety but, for my more publicly known informants, who can be found easily online, I use real names and the names of their affiliated organizations. I chose not to give the Complexo do Alemão a pseudonym due to a similar desire to bring visibility to an often under-recognized community.

Dissertation Organization

This dissertation is broken into three sections. The first discusses how the history of structural inequality relates to information technology in the *favela*. I describe how digital tools such as

Google autocomplete reproduce violent and alienated representations of the Complexo. I also examine how the Complexo's transition from a parallel state controlled by drug gangs to a pacified state controlled by police interacted with a discourse of digital transformation. The second section considers how activists in Brazil's network society address oppression and marginality. Specifically, I look at how dominant understandings of digital technology are promoted by middleclass NGOs and taught in informal classrooms. An expansive and corporately funded network of NGOs embraces a discursive hybrid of neoliberal entrepreneurialism and post-modern concepts of digital utopia. At a more local level, I explore the dialectic between *educador* (educator) and *educado* (educated) discussed by Paulo Freire, and how it relates to citizenship building in the *favela*. I examine how local digital photographers, who were themselves graduated from digital inclusion programs, engaged in a critical "reading of the world." The final section of this dissertation examines what happens when local activists operate independently of digital inclusion programs and begin to organize a broader public around critiques of pacification policy. Images of death that circulated on social media played a significant role in the local critique of pacification and the creation of a broader online public. I recount the histories of several deaths in the community and how activist networks mobilized this broader public around the ideal of non-violence. These final chapters demonstrate how digital inclusion becomes an essential tool in local understandings of violence.

My dissertation ultimately raises concerns about Brazil's democratic project, and about digital technology's promises of inclusion in marginalized communities. Pacification's impact is not limited to the Complexo. As of 2016, there were 37 UPPs, 208 officially pacified *favelas*, and

711,699 residents over 20 square kilometers affected by pacification. During my research, pacification policy expanded from the city of Rio de Janeiro into the broader state and has inspired similar policies throughout Brazil and Latin America. By 2014, more than 12 million people, or 6% of the country, lived in *favelas* across Brazil, with Rio accounting for two million (Censo 2010). Coincidently, the Complexo's socio-economic indicators (i.e., wealth, education, and heath), including access to digital technology, are in line with global averages. At the start of my research, there were more than 800 million people living in slums, shantytowns, and *favelas* around the world, making the Complexo both one of the more prosperous informal communities as well as one of the more potent examples of urban socio-economic disparity. Pacification also reflects debates around issues of zero-tolerance policing policies, neoliberal securitization, violence against minority groups, and the oppression of democratic movements across the globe. With this in mind, I see the pacified inclusion of the Complexo to be a critical example of precarity in marginalized urban communities, and of the local strategies that are taken to combat oppression. The issues faced by the Complexo reveal the limits of a future that forgets to solve the problems of the past and present.

Chapter One
Autocomplete Violence: Disruption in an Era of Digital Reproduction
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The Complexo do Alemão plays a minor role in a global "network society": a late-capitalist system where the flow of information rather than physical commodities governs cultural, economic, and social beliefs (Castells 1996). Over the course of my ethnographic research, I spoke with countless individuals from all walks of life who believed that the Complexo's inclusion in a network society could disrupt historic forms of exclusion such as poverty, political disenfranchisement, and police abuse. However, over the course of my conversations with corporate representatives, development workers, and digital activists from the favela, I often found the claim of digital disruption to be practically and theoretically untenable. Though the digital disruption had inclusionary potential, information technology also helped to spread problematic representations of the *favela*, reinforce class hierarchies, and delegitimize an everyday understanding of violence. By considering the Complexo's marginalized place in a network society, this chapter looks to how ethnographic theory can better inform the connection between digital technology and the reproduction of everyday violence.

Building on the central questions of my dissertation, this chapter asks: What are the potentials and limits assigned to digital technology? How do ideas of violence inform the digital world? And how can ethnography reveal digital technology's hidden politics of reproduction across social spaces? I provide three ethnographic vignettes that demonstrate the reproductive potentials of digital technology in Rio de Janeiro's *favelas*. These cases are contemporary to my research, and I see them as representing a set of historical conditions that influence how digital

technology became engrained in and around the social context of the *favela*. In my first example, I examine how Google's autocomplete search tool reproduces alienated representations of marginalized communities while operating under the guise of digital relativity. I refer to a Google search for the phrase "Complexo do Alemão" that suggests digital content relating to a ten year old and almost forgotten surge of violence in the Complexo. This example, I argue, reflects the relativistic logics of technology discussed by scholars such as Langdon Winner, Bruno Latour, and Lewis Mumford. These scholars question the politics of technology and how broader social narratives are linked to the artifacts of an era. I then describe the classed perspectives of Brazil's digital specialists who promote a script of a disruptive network society yet reproduce oppressive relationships with the *favela* in their personal lives. Lastly, I describe how Complexo residents reproduce a muted relationship to suffering despite the increased online visibility of violence in their community. These three ethnographic contexts will allow me to demonstrate how a "hidden politics" of digital reproduction operates across diverse technological and social spaces. To this extent, I aim to demonstrate an ethnographic connection between big data, social text, and digital technology.

Technology and Violence

Throughout my dissertation, I argue that the reproduction of violence is an essential feature of digital technology in the Complexo. At the heart of my argument, I question a narrative of digital "disruption" that is embraced by corporations and activists. The narrative of digital disruption portrays information technology as a tool of cultural progress that upsets archaic social arrangements (Bower and Christensen 1995). Bower and Christensen define technologies as disruptive when they redefine markets, cause previously technical paradigms to fail, and

encourage alternative, non-authoritative representations of marginalized communities. Corporations, scholars, and activists often promote the idea of digital disruption by embracing technology as a universal good that disrupts exclusionary forms of expression and knowledge creation (Fattal 2012). Disruption was an important concept for many of my informants in that they believed digital technology challenged entrenched social hierarchies in the *favela* and allowed residents to amplify their experiences of everyday violence. However, as I suggest throughout this dissertation, proponents of digital inclusion often confused the disruption of exclusionary representations with the disruption of everyday violence. I found that a narrative of digital disruption overlooked how social prejudices persisted on the Internet even when residents were able to use social media to share their experiences of street-level violence.

Studies of digital technology and studies of violence normally occupy distinct theoretical fields. Scholarly discussions of violence often focus on the ephemeral nature of power and everyday suffering (Das 2007) while scholarship concerning digital technology typically describes the potentials of virtual representations to disrupt a grounded reality (Boellstorff 2008). Social media ethnographers, however, sometimes come close to bridging this theoretical gap by studying activist movements that use online tools to resist social injustice (Escobar 2009; Juris 2008). I find these discussions useful in describing highly coordinated activists' actions that seek to challenge forms of social oppression. However, I also believe that ethnographers too often embrace the digitally disruptive optimism promoted by technology companies in the global north and, by doing so, fail to ask how digital technology can reproduce everyday experiences of oppression.

There are a number of scholars who suggest that digital disruption is a "science fiction" that fails to consider how technology is produced, consumed, and understood (Ginsburg 2008). James Smith's (2011) ethnography of conflict minerals in the Congo makes a clear scholarly connection between the production of digital technologies and direct political violence. Smith describes how coltan ore, a mineral that makes a cell phone vibrate, is tied to the life of Congolese child soldier. This tragic human cost required for digital inclusion grounds the digital world and shows that technology is tied to everyday experiences of violence. In terms of my research in the Complexo, Smith's argument is useful for understanding an ethnographic space where digital technology and violence interact. His research concerning the Congo also suggests that an ethnography of digital inclusion should examine the real world disparities created by the banal technological components of the information age.

Looking beyond a debate of positives and negatives, my research also takes into consideration a cluster of anthropological scholarship that frames the information age in more relativistic terms. William Mazzarella (2010) believes that optimism and pessimism are discursive mechanisms that help to legitimize digital technology and disguise the information age's more ambiguous potentials. Citing examples from the height of India's *ICT4G* (Information and Communication Technologies for Development) movement, Mazzarella finds observational value in the "inflated, excessive" (ibid., 784) tone of anecdotes concerning digital technology. Mazzarella argues that anecdotes that promote technology's potential for socio-economic development often fail to stand up to analytical scrutiny. Rather than critiquing the ICT4D movement for hubris, he calls for a discussion of information technology's performative aspects and how ideas of development can bring together a diverse group of individuals towards a

common goal. Similar to Mazzarella, I am more critical of the overly optimistic tone Brazil's digital inclusion discourse than the projects and individuals who are inspired by a belief that technology can help them "do good". I consider how digital disruption entails both positive and negative transformations (such as increased class mobility or alienated consumerism), and I ask what this contradiction reveals about the nature of technology's inclusionary dynamics.

Langdon Winner's (1981) work concerning the politics of artifacts, which I allude to throughout this dissertation in the context of the hidden politics of digital reproduction, aligns well with Mazzarella's analytically neutral discussion of ICT4D. Winner describes technologies that are designed with veiled political and social agendas; such as parkway bridges on Long Island built too short to allow for public buses and riot-proof urban planning in Second Empire Paris. While Winner's more notable examples are grand infrastructures built with political purposes, he argues that hidden politics are rarely a product of "conscious conspiracies or malicious intentions" (Winner 1989, 25). Rather, technologies are often created under social conditions that are already unfavorable to marginalized communities. I find Winner's ideas of political intentionality useful as I compare an intentional politics of digital disruption with an accidental or hidden politics that helps to reproduce violence in the Complexo.

Mazzarella's and Winner's theoretical approaches allude to a type of technological relativism that I witnessed when corporate employees, NGO workers, and activists discussed the universal human potentials of digital inclusion. By technological relativism, I refer to the view that digital technology creates value within unique social contexts and that there is no singular way to experience a global network society (see Fassin 2011; Hankins 2015). As an ethnographer, I cautiously embrace the view of technological relativism in that I believe that

there is no singular perspective of digital technology and, rather, the network society is understood through the lenses of race, gender, and class. Technological relativism also explains how an authoritative narrative disguises or hides more critical narratives and alternative outcomes. The narrative behind digital inclusion in Brazil, for example, helps to bring together individuals from a variety of political, economic, and national backgrounds. Favela residents as clients and international charity workers as providers may share a basic ideal of disruption but the two groups experience digital inclusion in unique ways. As an ethnographer, my research was designed to outline how individuals with unique social roles experienced digital technology and shaped their worldviews based on their experiences.

In order to bridge the theoretical disconnect of violence and digital technology and understand the variety of perspectives produced by digital inclusion, I designed a "multi-sited" ethnographic project that followed the movement of ideas, technologies, and individuals across a number of digital and physical spaces (Marcus 1985). In a physical sense, my field site included a range of social spaces, from boardrooms nestled at the top of skyscrapers to street corners occupied by drug traffickers. The types of technologies ranged from a nebulously but popularly understood concept of Internet to the number of pixels on a smart phone camera. The early 20th-century scholar Lewis Mumford (1934) describes a similarly multi-sited analytical scope when discussing "polytechnics," or small scale and individualized technologies, and "monotechnics," or mega-machines that combine the various functions of polytechnics. "The Internet," for example, is shorthand for a global information monotechnic that scales down to billions of polytechnics like smartphones and computers. Monotechnics and polytechnics depend on one another and help to maintain a technological status quo. Mumford argues that

this technological status quo reflects the practical and moral regimes of an everyday material world. A multi-sited approach allows me to ask how a community defines the moral practices of polytechnics and how they align with the morals and practices of a monotechnic Internet.

In the Complexo, my principle field site, technical arrangements and practices based around digital tools were informed by daily manifestations of physical, structural, and symbolic violence. The more visible examples of this included residents who shared images of shootouts between police and drug traffickers, information about residents hit by a *bala perdida* (stray bullet), and televised perp walks of accused criminals. These events were recorded, shared, and commented on using online social media, often in real time and by individuals who lived physically near to where the events occurred. Residents engaged this online content as a means to interpret the morality of violence, share these interpretations with like-minded individuals, and challenge alienated narratives about the Complexo found in corporate media.

Much like my need for a broad definition of technology, my research required a definition of violence that accounted for a variety of social actors and ethical valuations. Violence is commonly described as a physical force, exerted on objects and people, and coordinated to achieve specific goals. A description of violence that focuses on immediate physical injury, however, ignores historical inequalities, the intentions of oppressive actors, and the ways that perpetrators and victims co-construct understandings of suffering (Coronil and Skiuruski 2006, 84). I found that the Complexo's combination of socioeconomic inequalities—endemic poverty, high rates of disease, and lack of education—offers one example of how violence is a physical as well as political and symbolic force. The wide-ranging and everyday form of violence in the Complexo alludes to what anthropologists call "structural violence"

(Farmer et al. 2004), and what Philippe Bourgois defines as a " political economic organization of society that imposes conditions of physical and emotional distress, from high morbidity and mortality rates to poverty and abusive working conditions" (Bourgeois 2001, 7). Structural violence operates parallel to "direct political violence," which is "directly and purposefully administered in the name of political ideology" (Bourgeois 2001, 7). Examples of direct political violence include genocide, torture, and apartheid. Both direct political violence and structural violence suggest an entrenched socio-cultural arrangement that produces systematic forms of suffering. In terms of my research, the Complexo is one of the poorest and most segregated spaces in Rio de Janeiro and I consider it to be an epicenter of structural and political violence.

The Complexo's violence has been highly visible in corporate media and is often used by political commentators as a reason for further forms of oppression, segregation, and marginalization. Policymakers often planned around the idea that the Complexo was an epicenter of crime rather than of poverty, producing militarized development projects rather than development projects that were provided security. In my personal experience, I frequently spoke with middle class individuals who cited violence as a reason to not visit the Complexo. These same individuals often failed to acknowledge similar types of violence that affect their middle class or upper class neighborhoods, an unintentional omission that nonetheless helped to justify their personal acceptance of class segregation. I also witnessed a form of "symbolic violence," an inescapable force that legitimatizes oppressive meanings, traditions, and practices (Giroux 1981, 10; Bourdieu 1991; Goldstein 2003). Symbolic violence feeds into and propagates structural and political violence by valuing authoritative perspectives and ignoring the perspectives of marginalized communities. Racism and sexism are two of the more prominent

examples of everyday ideologies that maintain oppressive forms of authority and lead to direct physical violence, such as police violence against afro-Brazilian youth.

As an ethnographer of the digital, I most frequently observed symbolic violence as content posted onto Facebook, such as texted descriptions of a shooting or images of a dead body. The Complexo was also the subject of authoritative representations made by outsiders. During my three years of research, the Complexo was the subject of hundreds of hours of television news programing, several documentaries, and a feature-length film. These Brazilian-produced movies used the Complexo as a setting for Hollywood-style action movies where locals were almost always criminal conspirators and outsiders were often morally just police. These depictions of the Complexo embraced what Teresa Caldeira (1991) calls "talk of crime," or crime talk. Crime talk relies on the problematic assumption that the poor are dangerous and frames the *favela* as a birthplace of violence and criminality (Scheper-Hughes 1993; Goldstein 2003). For example, when I asked them about perceptions of crime in the Complexo, local activists frequently mentioned an unfortunate statement made by Sergio Cabral, the governor of Rio de Janeiro. Cabral claimed that Brazil would be better off with legalized abortion because, "*a favela é uma fábrica de marginal*" ("the *favela* is a factory of lowlifes") (A Folha de São Paulo 2007). This statement, an egregious example of crime talk from a politically powerful individual, inferred that lives in the *favela* were less valuable, inherently criminal, and in need of violent intervention on the part of the state. While some activists pounced on this quote in order to critique the State's treatment of *favelas*, many online commenters appeared to embrace Cabral's sentiment, praising his heavy-handed police tactics. Cabral's statement was heavily discussed online, seeping into captions of violent images on social media, and inspiring

debates on corporate news websites that focused heavily on law and order issues in Rio. In the case of Cabral, digital technology, a tool that promised to disrupt problematic representations, helped to aggregate or reproduce the symbolic violence of crime talk across a number of socio-technical contexts.

Crime talk circulated online and defined the Complexo's place in a global network society. In his description of a network society, Manuel Castells (1996) describes a "space of flows" where information infrastructure connects distant places through shared practices and beliefs, while also "isolating and subduing the logic of experience embodied in the space of places" (2001, 171). By prioritizing information over material value, participants in a network society perceive power and authority as detached from physical space. In the case the Complexo, crime talk is a form of information, a moral judgment communicated online in a way that detaches the image of oppressive actors from their real-world authority.

My multi-sited research scope allowed me to examine how a crime talk spread online and how individuals related their personal beliefs and prejudices to popular notions of a global information society. By critically engaging the motivations and actions of individuals, my research adapts aspects of Bruno Latour's (2002) actor-network theory and describes a network of agentive humans and seemingly agentive technologies. I am particularly interested in a group of individuals that Latour calls "techno-scientists," who use an expert script to promote authoritative forms of technology-based knowledge (Latour 1993: 42; Ritzer 2004: 1). A techno-scientist's script stabilizes, translates, and simplifies the interests of various human and non-human actors. I witnessed in the way NGO workers from a variety of projects and sponsored by different multinational corporations promote a relatively uniform ideology of digital disruption

when working in the favela. Considering the techno-scientist, Latour suggests that technologies alone are not morally accountable for their actions; they cannot be effective by themselves, nor can they produce a self-reflective concept of autonomous intentionality (Verbeck 2009). Society, in other words, is not simply an array of well-designed things but a network of humans and technologies (Williams 2002).

Similar to Latour, I seek a theoretical position that can describe the Complexo's script of digital disruption in terms of individual actors who have specific motivations and interests. Though my scholarship centers on how humans and machines adapt to social contexts, my theoretical and methodological approach is more human-centered than machine-centered, and I am highly attentive to the everyday social practices that help maintain digital networks. In contrast to a technology-centered idea of disruption that assigns morality to machines, I find that individuals produce the most profound moments of social transformation, and also reproduce the most problematic conditions of violence. Though digital technology facilitates specific cultural events, human interaction remains the central analytical factor for any conversation concerning a network society.

I found, for example, that the script of digital disruption promoted within the Complexo had the ability to be both disruptive and normative, and often allowed corporate actors and NGO workers to disguise their moral and ethical worldviews behind technology's veil. During my research, I met a number of software engineers, network managers, and Internet activists who engaged in a discourse of digital disruption but who also reproduced their own classed worldviews by engaging in crime talk and normalizing socio-economic segregation. Digital specialists also ignored how they, as middleclass Brazilians, benefited from a classed position

within a network society. I also heard a number of opinions from middle and upper class individuals who prioritized personal financial success and professional advancement over their organization's mission of bringing digital inclusion programs to the favela. This "bad faith", or an acknowledgement of limited commitment to the ideal of digital inclusion, suggested to me that the potentials for digital disruption was entrusted to a group of individuals who were practically and morally disinterested in challenging social conditions in the *favela* (Scheper-Hughes 1993). In the hand of these actors, digital technology helped to reassert class hierarchies rather than upset broader cultural and social processes.

As an ethnographer, I became keenly aware of how discussions of digital technology and violence deviated from a techno-scientific script and became influenced by everyday life. One of the more influential anthropological discussions of the everyday comes from Erving Goffman (1959) who discusses individuals in theatrical terms as actors who perform identity through the daily manipulation of their setting, appearance, and emotional state. Adapting Goffman to a postmodern discussion of power and representation, Michel de Certeau (1984) examines practices and creative acts of resistance that are embedded in everyday practices. De Certeau focuses on the "ordinary man," whose understandings of the world are passionate and intricate but not seen as "expert" or authoritative. Along a similar vein, James Scott (1990) describes a non-authoritative form of expression, or a "hidden transcript" that takes place "off stage" and away from the ears of authority. Scott argues that "backstage" conversations such as gossip, folktales, and jokes allow the oppressed to speak to, about, and in opposition to authority. Building on Goffman, De Certeau, and Scott, my research looks at the everyday backstage of

digital technology in the Complexo and the discursive practices of its hidden resistance to violence.

The most definitive topic of conversation in the Complexo was street-level violence. The everyday manifestations of violence in the Complexo reflected what Michael Taussig described in the case of Colombia as a "culture of terror": a way of knowing that normalizes violence, not just over time, but also across public and private spaces (Taussig 1987). Philippe Bourgeois, invoking Scheper-Hughes (1992; 1997), defines everyday violence as "the routine practices and expressions of interpersonal aggression that serve to normalize violence at the micro-level such as domestic, delinquent, and sexual conflict, and even substance abuse" (2001, 9). These scholars note how a culture of silence is often produced by daily manifestations of violence. Veena Das discusses similar cases of oppressed communities negotiating a "burned out and numbed relation to life" (Das 2008, 11). For Das, communities that experience everyday violence learn to quietly refuse their victimhood and, instead, animate their everyday speech with a dignified life that, for outsiders, is hard to understand in light of the violence. Residents of the Complexo have several strategies to bring dignity to their life. Many of these strategies I discuss later on in my dissertation, when I describe activists who hope to elevate local interpretations of favela violence through the use of digital inclusion. These same activists are also worn down by a system that appears unwilling to change and an apathy that develops through unceasing violence against their communities. Speaking of muted reactions to violence, Das writes, "those violations of the body cannot be spoken, for they create the sense in oneself that one is a thing, a beast, or a machine; these stand in contrast to the violations that can be scripted in everyday life when time can be allowed to do its work of reframing or

rewriting the memories of violence" (Das 2008, 90). While digital inclusion projects often promised to bring these everyday experiences with violence to the forefront, many of my neighbors inside the Complexo continued to react with a form of uncritical silence.

Ethnographers of the *favela* have noted similarly muted reactions to everyday violence. Barcello and Zaluar describe the *favela*'s "ecology of danger": a social environment structured around everyday and structural violence (Barcello & Zaluar 2014). Ben Penglase describes *favela* residents who are *estressados* (stressed) by the precarity of everyday violence in their communities (Penglase 2014, 66). Scheper-Hughes's ethnography of a *favela* in the Brazilian Northeast discusses how high infant mortality and the muted reactions of mothers to their children's deaths reflected a psychological adaptation to the inevitability of loss, suffering, and socioeconomic exclusion (Scheper-Hughes 1993). According to Scheper-Hughes, these muted reactions are "[the] workings of a hegemonic discourse on criminality/deviance/marginality and on the appropriateness of police and state violence in which all segments of the population participate and to which they acquiesce, often to the detriment of their own class or race interests" (Scheper-Hughes 1993, 225). Indeed, silence concerning violence in the Complexo would prove harmful to residents. Political representation was already limited by historical socio-economic inequalities, yet, when the Complexo's residents found themselves with the ear of individuals in power, I found that they often failed to use their position to challenge authority. Rather, they returned to a form of cultural silence and acquiescence to authoritative narratives concerning violence in their community.

Most of the digital activists that I spoke with acknowledged a problematic silence concerning everyday violence and actively sought to change the ways that residents could

express themselves and organize. They were inspired by the revolutionary promises of Paulo Freire's critical pedagogy and believed digital interventions could reveal a dormant critical perspective (Freire 1973). Freire emphasizes context and subjectivity over more normative forms of learning (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Cole, 1996; Lerner, 1991; Lewin, 1951; Rogoff, 2003). For Freire, institutionalized learning and traditional literacy reinforce oppression in everyday relationships through formalized rules and "banked" forms of knowledge that rely on memorization and reiteration (Freire 1973). Freire also discusses how marginalized expressions are rehearsed in everyday relationships of power and authority (Freire 1985, 52). Traditional literacy is inherently exclusive; through a culture of omission, society was encouraged to ignore the hopes, doubts, and desires of the illiterate. According to Freire, a critical pedagogy allows the oppressed to "read" using traditional literacies, but also to "read the world" by embracing and deconstructing their experiences of suffering. Inspired by this stance, local activists from the Complexo integrated the idea of reading the world into their digital activism and encouraged residents to make images and discussions of violence more public by taking to online social media. In this sense, Freire provides not only a theoretical backdrop for the question of a more human-centered discussion of digital disruption, but also a practical guide for the actions of marginalized individuals who aspire to achieve inclusion.

As I continue my discussion of the hidden politics of digital inclusion in a pacified Complexo, I will discuss ethnographic strategies that allowed me to question a digitally disruptive script, and that allowed my informants to find a discursive individual agency in the midst of everyday violence. I apply the above theoretical links between technology and violence to the specific conditions observed through my ethnographic research in the Complexo. I will

look at how digital technology disguises a reproduction of structural and symbolic violence while appearing to critique more physical manifestations of violence in the Complexo. Below I provide three examples of this intersection that span technological, classed, and physical spaces, and that exemplify a paradoxical relationship between the digital disruption and reproduction of violence.

AutoComplete and Violence

During the time I lived in the Complexo, from 2014 to 2016, I often locked myself in my room to search the Internet for academic studies, government reports, and news stories about the community. One day, early in 2016, I typed, "Complexo do Alemão" into a Google search bar. Google search results returned over 265,000 websites in .058 seconds. An algorithm commonly referred to as "autocomplete" ranked the totality of previously engaged searches for "Complexo do Alemão" according to a number of criteria, including popularity, geography, and adherence to local laws.[1] The results appeared in a dropdown box below the search bar: "Complexo do Alemão Massacre," "Teleférico do Alemão," "Complexo do Alemão teleférico," "Complexo do Alemão *favela*," and "Complexo do Alemão cable car." After living in the community for two years, I found that these predictions made sense in terms of a broader social context, but that they also mirrored an ethnographically "thin" crime talk concerning the Complexo.

The first autocomplete prediction, "Complexo do Alemão Massacre," refers to a two-month period preceding the 2007 Pan Am games when police killed forty-four Complexo residents. In

[1] It may not be possible to reproduce my results because of time, place, and location of future searches affect autocomplete's algorithm.

one 24-hour period, the police killed nineteen residents, including a teenage student sitting in a classroom and a six-year-old playing at home. One link suggested by Google discussed how human rights investigators sent by the Brazilian government uncovered evidence of summary executions of accused traffickers by police. Another link described how UNICEF's review of the massacre compared violence in the Complexo to the Gaza Strip and Afghanistan (Globo 2007). With this result, autocomplete reflected the specific focus taken by outsiders to the community in the lead-up to a world sporting event, with the most noteworthy results directing attention towards moments of violence—moments that preceded an increase in international news stories about the *favelas*.

However, by the time I received the above autocomplete results in 2016, the massacre was a distant memory in the Complexo. Despite the widespread attention it received in 2007, the massacre was all but forgotten by many of my informants. Residents who I asked about the event could not describe a specific "massacre" in the community, could not tell me when it took place, or explain the effect the event had on subsequent security policies in the Complexo. Violence in the Complexo did not end after the massacre and the subsequent public outcry. At the time of my research, someone in the Complexo was shot once every five days as the result of police-trafficker conflict, with the injuring shot coming from a policeman's gun. Based on autocomplete alone, it would be difficult to grasp how violence affected the community for decades before the massacre, or how police violence took new and everyday forms in the decade that followed.

Autocomplete's three suggestions for the Complexo's *teleférico* (cable car) also suggested a problematic relationship to authoritative knowledge about the community and everyday

experiences of violence. When work started on the *teleférico* in 2010, city planners removed thousands of homes. The US$100 million system made by the French gondola multinational *Poma* draped the Complexo's seven hills like a tropical ski resort and was possibly the community's most celebrated feature. Thousands of middle-class and foreign tourists flocked to the *teleférico* after it was featured in the opening credits of a popular *telenovella*. Brazil's largest ice cream company even sponsored the system, painting individual cable cars racecar-red to match their brand and filling the interiors with images of smiling families at the beach. At the start of my research, over five thousand commuters used the *teleférico* every day.

The autocomplete results for the *teleférico* referred users to news sites that promoted an official promotional strategy for the *teleférico*, often discussing how the *teleférico* helped to bring tourists into the community and focusing on the amusement park-like experience of middleclass visitors. For example, a video produced by the BBC appeared in Google searches with the headline "Cable Car Flies Over Rio Slum." The video highlights the *teleférico*'s view and the convenience it provides for the community. The *teleférico* guided visitors on a fifteen-minute ride suspended a hundred meters above the community. They were expected to disembark at the final of seven stations, take photos, buy souvenirs, and, after about ten minutes, return the way they came. I rode the *teleférico* almost daily during my research. Tourists riding the *teleférico* took selfies while residents carried on conversations with neighbors. I was often compelled into conversation with fellow passengers who could not help but ruminate at the majesty of ten thousand houses that passed underneath. For most rides, however, I was alone. The two-meter-tall fiberglass windows vibrated with the sounds of

children playing and neighbors chatting. In these moments, the *teleférico* appeared to match what autocomplete suggested.

However, I found that the positive descriptions promoted by autocomplete disguised a far more critical local perspective that linked the *teleférico* with socioeconomic segregation and violence. Violence was a constant threat and shootouts frequently shuttered the *teleférico*. On one trip, a shootout erupted between drug dealers and police a hundred meters below, forcing three other passengers and me to huddle on a corrugated aluminum floor as the car scraped along its line. By 2016, news of shootouts had caused the flow of visitors to slow to a few dozen each day. During Rio's Olympics, I took the *teleférico* three times over the course of two weeks, and employees told me that days had passed without the presence of tourists. A feature of the teleférico, tourism, that was so heavily promoted over the previous four years, was overlooked during one of Rio de Janeiro's most touristic moments. Soon after the games, the *teleférico*'s corporate operators announced that they ran out of funds to operate the system. Locals assumed that a corrupt official had siphoned money from the *teleférico*'s operating budget and could no longer afford to pay its rank and file operators. By the end of 2016, the system was shuttered indefinitely. For many in the Complexo, the *teleférico* was a symbol of the war on drugs, corporate exploitation of the community, the failures of the state, and the constant threat of socioeconomic segregation. Rather than being an amusement park ride, as autocomplete results suggested, the *teleférico* was a lens by which the Complexo's residents understood violence and the failed promises of the state.

Autocomplete results for the Complexo's massacre and its *teleférico* system demonstrate a general disconnect between the disruptive and reproductive potentials of digital

technology. Google designed autocomplete to be an objective and unprejudiced tool—a tool that reflected the company's goal of "democracy on the web" that "crosses all borders." Autocomplete mobilizes a massive set of user data (i.e., search histories, recent spikes in searches, and the location of the search) to predict virtual and real world interests (such as where someone will eat, what political causes they support, and what products individuals are likely to buy). The organization and analysis of massive digitized data sets like those used by autocomplete is often referred to as "big data," and is seen by scholars and corporations alike as an example of digital technology's disruptive potentials. Big data is often heralded as a state-of-the-art combination of classic informatics, the social sciences, urbanism, and design to make new forms of governance (Graham 2004; Foth 2009). It is credited with helping to win major league baseball pennants, decoding DNA, easily organizing petabytes of data across thousands of computers, and revolutionizing financial trading. In the years before the start of my research, the politically neutral logic of big data had crept into the governance of Rio's *favelas*. Rio built two new Smart City data centers—one for managing motor traffic and another tied to emergency services. The global urban informatics community praised the centers as shining examples of the collection, classification, retrieval, and use of mobile data. In contrast, some observers criticized the centers for being underutilized, beneficial only to already well-served neighborhoods, and shortsighted (Gaffney and Robertson 2016). When I asked, most of my Complexo friends were unaware that the city was harvesting their mobile data or, even that there were expansive and expensive data centers run by their city government.

Critics of autocomplete argue that the tool generates false expectations, lends authenticity to offensive beliefs, reproduces misinformation, and favors the perspectives of

privileged groups (Miller & Record 2016; Baker & Potts 2013; Introna & Nissenbaum, 1999; Rogers, 2009).[2] Google does not and cannot document the intention behind a search or what effects autocomplete will have once a user receives a suggestion. Ethnographically, big data algorithms raise questions about who is included and who may be left out of the information society because of its ability to reproduce homogenizing and oppressive narratives (Boellstorff 2013). Big data, like many other digital technologies, tends to be stripped of its everyday meaning and seen through more abstract ideology of transformation and disruption. This is the case with the autocomplete results mentioned above, in that they reproduce an authoritative narrative about the Complexo that ignores everyday experiences.

Google repeatedly denies responsibility for the problematic worldviews reproduced by its services. For example, in reaction to a 2011 lawsuit in Italy claiming that autocomplete associated an innocent man with fraud, a lawyer for the company stated, "We believe that Google should not be held liable for terms that appear in autocomplete as these are predicted by computer algorithms based on searches from previous users, not by Google itself" (Mayer 2011) Indeed, recent controversies show that users can intentionally manipulate autocomplete and that Google is not directly responsible for many of these deleterious results. After accusations of tampering in the 2016 U.S. presidential election, a Google spokesman reaffirmed the neutrality of their services by declaring, "Google Autocomplete does not favor any

[2] After entering 2,690 combination of question words and identity terms (i.e., why do blacks…), Baker and Potts (2013) found that autocomplete returned mostly negative stereotypes about marginalized groups but stop short of claiming that autocomplete directly fosters negative stereotypes.

candidate or cause."[3] Another case that most anthropologists would find problematic occurred in early 2017 and involved a Google search for the term "Boasian Anthropology." Google suggested a "snippet view" for the website Wikipedia that reproduced text from a white supremacist blog. Rather than embracing a culturally relativistic approach that is central to academic understandings of ethnography, the Google snippet read: "Boasian Anthropology is a pseudo-scientific Jewish assault on White European racial consciousness and identity. To put it simply, the Jewish Boasian school of Anthropology suggested wrongly, that 'race was a social construct' not rooted in biology or scientific determinism"(Toor 2017). In response to complaints that the snippet was both anti-Semitic and a misrepresentation of anthropological tradition, a spokesman for Google deflected blame away from their algorithm and suggested that users were responsible for the results: "Google does not endorse or select responses manually. This content comes from the third-party sites that we do not control. The feature is an automatic and algorithmic match to the search query" (ibid.). Even in the face of possible election tampering and anti-Semitism, Google's initial response is to defend autocomplete through a lens of technological relativity.

These actions, I would argue, call into question Google's goal of bringing a disruptive form of democracy to the web. Further complicating a promise of objective neutrality, Google's edits autocomplete for "inappropriate" results related to pornography, images of violence, hate speech, or invasions of privacy. Google also censors state dissidents in China, white nationalists

[3] See Richardson, V. (2016, June 10). Google denies manipulating search engine to hide unflattering posts about Hillary Clinton. Retrieved February 27, 2018, from http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2016/jun/10/google-denies-burying-bad-hillary-clinton-stories/

in Europe, and intellectual property "pirates" in the U.S. In this sense, autocomplete is influenced by several sources: big data, the explicit control of information by users, and Google's alteration of result—all of which may cause a conflict between neutrality and social appropriateness. All of these alterations, one can assume, are in effect for autocomplete results relating to the Complexo do Alemão.

I see autocomplete's results, especially relating to the Complexo, as an example of how digital technologies give an authority of scale and importance to the thinnest representations. Considering the issues associated with big data technologies like autocomplete, Tom Boellstroff calls for an analysis of "thick data," or how social meaning is constructed around the data points produced in the digital age. My ethnographic experience in the Complexo allowed me to compare autocomplete results for the community with a lived reality and create an ethnographically thick data set of the Complexo. I kept track of dozens of local social media accounts, took screen shots of their comments, archived thousands of messages, and compared these other data points to my ethnographic experience. I found affinity with previous scholars such as Boellstorff who expressed concerns over digital technology's ability to exclude narratives and obscure a more local reality. My thick data set allowed me to test the disruptive and transformative script often applied to digital technologies in everyday settings. Rather than being politically neutral and socially disruptive, I found that digital technologies provide a technical infrastructure for a dominant narrative that embraces crime talk and violent representations of the Complexo. Autocomplete and similar big data technology show how pre-existing conditions within marginalized communities have consequences in a network society,

shape its technological form and function, and ultimately reproduce authoritative beliefs that lead to violence.

Individuals in a Network Society

While tools like autocomplete present an ideological baseline for the hidden politics of digital reproduction, my ethnographic methods encouraged me to interact with human actors who were negotiating a script of digital disruption and violence in their everyday lives. While in the Complexo, I visited homes and workplaces, drank morning coffee with my neighbors, and shared a beer with them at the end of the workday. The majority of these were digital specialists, activists and educators involved in digital inclusion projects. Many were programmers and digital artists who lived in the Complexo or who were sympathetic to *favela*-based causes. A smaller yet professionally significant group of informants were middleclass and elite specialists who worked in the private sector and had only a passing contact with the *favela*. While this last group embraced a discourse of digital disruption, they were often unsympathetic to the idea of technology intervening in the *favela*'s violence.

For example, I was introduced to a group of Brazil's digital specialists years before the start of my principle doctoral research in the Complexo. At the time, I was living in Rio, not as a researcher but as a lowly expat, teaching English in order to afford rent on a sofa in a *favela* close to Rio's beach. My students included a vice president of Petrobras, corporate lawyers for a multinational beverage company, and the marketing team for MTV Brazil. One of my students, Pedro, was an affably nerdy thirty-year-old computer technician who worked for Rio's Olympic Committee. We met for weekly English lessons at his high-rise apartment in Botafogo, one of Rio's "noble" neighborhoods. Pedro often spoke with pride about facilitating world sporting events, fostering Rio's place as a global and cosmopolitan city, and being an essential

part of how international visitors connected with a broader global information society. One of our lessons stood out to me in particular. After arriving late to the lesson, Pedro showed me a video of him playing a game of blind soccer, a variation of futsal where participants are blindfolded to mimic visual impairment. He wore a digital blindfold that produced a sound when pointed in the direction of the ball. He spoke for almost fifty minutes about his experience, the diverse people he met, and the profound sense of empathy he gained for the visually impaired. He used the video to argue that the modern Special Olympics, including events like blind soccer, were transformed and made better by digital technologies. He explained that the Wi-Fi networks he helped to build and manage would provide athletes, organizers, and spectators with the means to share their abilities with the rest of the world, while showing that Rio de Janeiro was a welcoming place. However, Pedro lost his optimism for digital technology once he spoke about the *favelas*. During a different lesson, I asked about Wi-Fi antennas from the 2007 Pan Am games that had been repurposed for a social project in a nearby *favela*. Pedro's normally jovial mood shifted to indignation. The *favela* was visible from Pedro's window. He stood up and pointed towards the window and delved directly into a problematic crime talk: "You know it's all stolen? We have to take back the *favela* or Rio will always be backwards…. You *gringos* don't know what it is. I never go to the *favela*…. It's not safe. You'll catch a bullet."(Author's notes January 2012).

For Pedro, crime disqualified the *favela* from receiving free Wi-Fi antennas. He refused to set foot in a nearby neighborhood until heavy-handed action was taken to rectify it. Indeed, for many outsiders like Pedro who embraced crime talk, the *favela* was a *terra de ninguem,* or no-man's land, to be avoided physically and socially. While Pedro promoted the transcendent

script of digital technology, he did not apply the script equally and often filtered it through middle-class crime talk concerning the *favela*. For Pedro, digital technology brought Brazil to the world and helped the blind to see, but it should not be used to challenge structural violence in the *favela*.

In the years after I taught him English, Pedro and I enjoyed a healthy banter on social media—commenting and "liking" each other's posts and sending each other direct messages to discuss life. At one point, Pedro suggested that I "like" the Facebook page "*Bandido Bom é Bandido Morto*" ("A Good Criminal is a Dead Criminal"). The page often featured images of young black men suspected of crimes receiving violent treatment from the police or apprehended by an angry mob. The group's online commentators joined the mobs in indignation and called for future extrajudicial killings. One post showed a group of men in bathing suits beating a man on the beach. A caption for the photo read, "Thief beat up and tortured by beach goers. Anyone feel bad?" Made curious by some of the stunning claims, I frequently investigated the profiles of those who followed and commented on "*Bandido Bom*." The commentators appeared to come from a spectrum of class positions, including a *favela* working class that Teresa Caldeira (2002) described as disillusioned by the police's ability to combat violence in their communities. I found the page disturbing, often racist, prejudiced toward the poor, and a contrast to the content I preferred to engage online. Unfortunately for our online and offline friendship, it became clear to me that Pedro opposed my stance on *favela* issues. After posting frustrated comments on a post that praised the torture of a homeless person accused of petty theft, I later came to believe that my online friendship with Pedro ended because of this page.

A few years after tutoring Pedro in English, I returned to Rio to carry out my principle dissertation research. One night I was on the bus that drove through Pedro's neighborhood and saw his wife, Maria, as she walked along the sidewalk pushing a baby stroller. I assumed that Maria and Pedro had a child and was curious as to why I had not seen the news on social media. To my surprise, Pedro and Maria had removed me as their Facebook friend and Skype contact, and had "blocked" me on Twitter. I assumed, but could not know without re-establishing contact with them, that they eliminated me from their digital world because of my political opinions concerning police brutality that I shared over social media.

My relationship with Pedro taught me two lessons about how privileged individuals negotiate the supposedly disruptive information that circulates within a network society. First, Pedro showed me that the discourse of digital disruption can easily transform into more oppressive speech such as crime talk. Second, Pedro also reflected the ability of digital specialists to sort out inconvenient worldviews that do not match their personal politics. Anthropologist João de Silva Martins finds a similar paradox within elite modernist narratives that describe parts of Brazil as "backwards," including more indentured agrarian labor communities and the urban *favela,* while other parts are considered to be at the forefront of modernism (Martins 1996, 19). Martins describes this as a "clash between the economic and social" (ibid.) that came about not in opposition to the country's pursuit of modern capitalism, but because of it. In line with what I witnessed in Brazil's network society, Martins contends that those who are helped by modernity in Brazil often harbor problematic worldviews that can prevent others from taking part in a disruptive progress.

Considering Pedro's views of the *favela*, his online activity, and the history of progress in Brazil, I saw digital specialists as selectively ideal and ethically ambiguous, often reinforcing middleclass and elite narratives of communities less privileged than their own. Ethnography gave me insight into how digital specialists deviated from the network society's disruptive script and instead promoted oppressive worldviews that led to the reproduction of violence in the *favela*. Even when digital specialists appeared sympathetic to *favela* causes, I found myself questioning their adherence to a script of digital disruption, and whether they were using a privileged position to reproduce their authority in more hidden ways. Middleclass specialists in particular duplicated a problematically facile vision of digital inclusion that ignored conflicts between classes and the needs of communities that are products of Brazil's particular history of socio-economic disparity. In the context of my broader dissertation, I will return to examples of individuals who, not unlike Pedro, helped to define and maintain the discourse around digital disruption while also reproducing paradoxically classed perspectives. The dissonant opinions of digital specialists demonstrate that the meanings behind technology are shaped by human users and exist in a social world.

The Everyday Code of a Network Society

I discovered early in my research that elite corporations and middle-class specialists often avoid the everyday conditions that define how users experience digital disruption. Many of the middleclass digital specialists who I interviewed were physically and professionally isolated from the communities that were supposedly helped by digital technology. This distance caused digital specialists to overlook the ways that structural violence affected and informed marginalized experiences within a network society.

As an ethnographer, I felt compelled to share the precarious material conditions of the Complexo with my informants. Living in the community allowed me to understand the more stable digital world they used to circulate critiques about violence. I rented a room at the center of the community on top of an NGO named the *Oca dos Curumins*. My tin-roofed home overlooked a valley crammed with thousands of informally built shacks. Most mornings, the *teleférico* woke me as it began to roll over the community. Countless other days, I woke to the whizz-popping of an early morning shootout. The police often strafed overhead with a Vietnam-era Huey helicopter. News helicopters lingered even higher and recorded images of the action, broadcasting them over television and the Internet. After months of early morning police operations, I began to sleep through shootouts. I learned that I would most likely find posts about the shootouts on social media once I woke. These included videos with rifle shells scattered on the ground, walls freshly punctured by gun shots, the cracking sound of gunfire recorded by terrified residents huddled in their bathrooms, armored troop carriers preparing to enter the community at dawn, and unnerved residents taking cover on the side of the road as they waited for a city bus. These rude awakenings reflected the types of everyday violence that informed the Complexo's online and offline social realities.

After waking up in the morning, I often went to buy *pão frances* (French bread) and *presunto* (ham) for the Oca's breakfast. My five-minute trip to the bakery reminded me of how normal violence was in the community. Over the course of two years, at least five *tiroteios* (shootouts) took place along my route. When I mentioned these shootouts, my baker assured me that the violence was non-consequential and explained that business was only interrupted for a few minutes at a time. As evidence, she pointed to the hundreds of residents that

continued to bustle down Grota, a central road that cut through the center of the Complexo, despite the threat of violence. She took a joking tone: “We’re accustomed to the noise. You’re probably already accustomed.” I smiled politely and told her that I was becoming less frightened by the shootouts. Indeed, after several months in the Complexo, I had embraced an interpretive framework that educated me to, at times, disregard and normalize this violence.

My baker’s humor exemplified the normalizing, minimalizing, and often counter-intuitive affect that permeates the Complexo’s world. As Donna Goldstein (2003, 9) suggests, acts of domination in the *favela* are intentionally left public, while acts of resistance such as humor and outright critique are often suppressed. Humor was one of many features of a hidden transcript that allowed the *favela* a collective critique of everyday contradictions and of embodied forms of oppression regarding race, class, and gender (Goldstein 2003). Jokes about rape, murder, and other forms of suffering—sentiments that appear incommensurable with the seriousness of events—are essential to how *favela* residents understand their world and socioeconomic marginality in their community. Humor also encourages *favela* residents to avoid more direct political action, like organized protest and civil disobedience. Humor and other forms of resistance were publicly mute acts, at once demonstrating an agentive form of resistance as well as a normalized understanding of violence. I found that this muted condition was also the norm, rather than the exception, for online commentary. Just as humor was a tool for critique, so was online discussion, as residents often engaged in online conversation that critiqued racism, sexism, and classism. More often than not, this critique was ignored by the broader network society, and most residents of the Complexo did not expect their posts to garner

attention; the conversation was meant for their close acquaintances. Overt and intentional critiques of violence were rare.

At the Oca, I lived with a group of individuals who were exemplary of more historical efforts to amplify public expression in the Complexo. Arriving by 8 a.m. most mornings, dozens of the NGO's neighbors visited the Oca's director, Tia Bete, to *reforçar* (reinforce) basic reading and writing skills. Almost every morning, Bete sat with a neighbor, and the two would trace their fingers across a piece of paper or book and sound out letters. I spoke with Bete's students before and after their lessons. We discussed where they lived, worked, attended school, what they thought of the Complexo, and what they thought of Bete. Our conversations often danced around the subject of violence but rarely engaged the subject directly.

Bete saw her work as an important bulwark against the Complexo's city-low literacy and education rates. Since participating in one of Paulo Freire's "cultural circles" in the 1980s—where participants would break into groups and learn to read in under a week—Bete had taught over three thousand Complexo residents to read. She embraced Paulo Freire's claims that a critical pedagogy could disrupt the normative silence that had developed around violence in the Complexo. She encouraged her students to identify and create local forms of knowing, and to communicate these ideas to the world through art, activism, and socially conscious businesses. Bete's students ranged from five-year-old children who had yet to begin formal schooling to elderly widows who needed help reading their monthly electricity bills. A "heat map" released by Brazil's census bureau showed that the geographic area around the Oca had the Complexo's highest literacy rate despite matching a broader set of socioeconomic indices (salary, years in school, life expectancy, etc.). Over the course of my research, I personally

witnessed Bete help dozens of individuals learn how to read. Many of the digital activists that I followed for the remainder of my research passed through the Oca, sought Bete's advice, and asked for her help. I recognized her work as an antecedent and inspiration for the type of philosophies adapted by a younger generation of digital activists. Like Bete, most of the Complexo's digital activists were well versed in Freire's pedagogy of the oppressed and integrated the philosophy into their activism.

Beyond pedagogical concerns, my mornings observing Bete gave me insight into the types of everyday challenges faced by activists in the Complexo and how those challenges were filtered through digital platforms. For example, one morning, Bete was sending messages to her contacts on WhatsApp while looking over the shoulder of a nine-year-old named Thiago, who sat drawing out the Latin alphabet. I read a Facebook post that had earned hundreds of likes from members of the community and, without thinking of the unease that many in the Complexo had while discussing violence, I mentioned the story to Bete in front of Thiago. According to police, a trafficker's gun misfired. A stray bullet hit a woman in the chest as she sat on a sofa watching television. Her husband discovered her corpse hours later after returning from a nightshift. Their three-year-old son was home during the incident. In response to me mentioning the story, Bete asked in what part of the Complexo the shooting happened. The victim lived on a street near a government-built cinema on the other side of the Complexo. Thiago interrupted, "That's where I live. What's her name?"

I read Thiago the name, "Catia."

Thiago declared in a moment of stunned excitement, "That's my neighbor. I saw her yesterday." His eyes sunk toward his workbook, appearing to only briefly register the

significance of his neighbor's death. He asked Bete if he had written his letters correctly. Bete leaned into the workbook and exclaimed, "Great!" I noted the conversation on my phone and continued reading about Catia.

Over the next few days, several stories about Catia appeared online. Activist groups like those that appeared on my Facebook timeline about Catia's death demonstrate a rare public mobilization of the Complexo's hidden transcript. The online discussions that occurred after these posts paralleled a hidden transcript that I observed in places like the Oca. Hundreds more shared story's about Catia's death on their social media accounts. After our conversation about Catia's death, I found myself comparing Thiago's muted reaction to the post with the ways that many in the Complexo uncritically normalize the digital display of violence in their community. Like most stories of violence in the Complexo, the attention paid to Catia's death quickly faded from street-level and online conversations.

One morning a week later, I found myself sitting with Bete, drinking coffee, and reviewing my notes of the conversation. I asked Bete why Thiago was not more distraught, why Bete made no attempt to console a child who'd just learned he lost a neighbor, and why the community did not organize in protest after such a senseless murder. She replied, "He understands what happened and he doesn't want to think about it. He probably didn't know her that well. Whichever way, this isn't the first neighbor of his who has died. This is just the reality." Bete lacked a response to my question about why the community failed to protest Catia's death. She suggested that responsibility for the murder was ambiguous at best and Catia's family appeared to want to simply move on without angering local drug gangs or the

police. Catia seemed to disappear from the community's consciousness and I did not hear of the event again.

Thiago's silence reflects a central problem in the ethnographic methods of digital technology: embodied reactions, such as culturally-informed emotions and physical sensations, often go unrecognized as authoritative readings of the world (Sipe 2007). Similarly, digital technology often fails to reproduce the visceral experiences that inspire online shared content. At the time of our conversation, it appeared to me that neither Thiago nor Bete had a strong reaction to Catia's death. I later came to see my conversation with Thiago as a reflection of the normative digital techniques reproduced by a violent setting like the Complexo where a tired silence often overcomes a desire to critique. Instead of responding critically to the information about Catia's death that I found online, both Thiago and Bete had a muted reaction. They appeared focused on smaller challenges that they could resolve in their everyday lives, such as learning to read (or teaching a child how to read).

By observing Bete's literacy programs and her everyday experiences, I also gained insight into the challenges faced by individuals who called for digital disruption but were limited by their own culturally informed worldviews. Social media provided a ready-made platform to introduce the residents of the Complexo to Freire's tactic of critiquing local experiences. Adapting Freire's critique of traditional literacy, activists in the Complexo shared locally produced representations of suffering and sought to cultivate a critical digital literacy that could disrupt the online aggregation of oppressive crime talk and the real-world reproduction of violence. Thiago's muted reaction demonstrated a disconnect between responses to violence in a physical space and responses to violence that I observed in an online space. Digital inclusion

programs sought to bridge a gap between real world experiences, the sharing of these experiences online, and critical political thought. In part because of his age and socio-economic background, Thiago had yet to partake in the potential benefits of digital inclusion and the process of translating online content into political subjectivity. Nonetheless, Thiago's silence and limited political consciousness reflected a central problem that digital inclusion programs hoped to solve through the development of a critical form of technical literacy.

Conclusion

My research concerning the Complexo's network society suggests an opportunity to better define the ethnographic intersection of violence and digital technology and the ethnographic problems that appear when these two subjects are analyzed as one singular phenomenon. When examining the hidden politics of digital reproduction, the traditional narrative of digital disruption suggested by scholars, corporations, and activists appears incomplete and deceptive. The broader technical arrangements that lend social authority to the reproduction of violence in the *favela*, as can be seen through my observations of individuals like Pedro and Thiago, raise questions about the disruptive potentials of digital relativity and the types of agency residents of the Complexo have to challenge violence. As I continue my analysis of digital inclusion in the Complexo, more examples will emerge of how the Complexo's everyday violence is translated both online and offline, and what this means for the disruptive potentials of a network society.

Going forward, I believe a central ethnographic question concerning digital disruption in the Complexo is whether new technologies prioritize the voice of the oppressed or simply reproduce oppressive relationships under the guise of inclusion. Answers to the conclusion will need to take into account who is benefiting from a flow of digital information within Castells' network society and who is simply allowed access to technology without the ability to actively

influence the meanings and receptions behind its use. If favela residents are included simply through technological access but have only a marginal influence on critical social narratives taking place on the Internet, I argue that the influential players and institutions of a network society possibly share responsibility for reproducing a form of structural violence. In the case of the Complexo, I witnessed how a narrative of digital disruption is embedded within a system of oppression that silences and marginalizes favela voices. Digital technology was part and parcel of contradictory realities in the Complexo: inclusion but not equality, pacification but not peace. This "auto-completion" of violence offers a nuanced story about the reproduction of violent marginality within a modern network society.

Chapter Two
Pacified Citizenship: Ex-Drug Traffickers and Symbols of Digital Disruption in Rio de Janeiro's *Favelas*

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During my time in the Complexo do Alemão, I documented how a diverse group of social actors, from corporations to children, promoted a narrative of digital inclusion. Often, a narrative of digital inclusion allowed individuals and institutions to disguise broader social conditions as well as their own unique and often self-interested politics. For example, corporate marketing campaigns embraced digital inclusion but often ignored the role of government policies in facilitating social and political development while presenting for-profit businesses as altruistic organizations. At the center of these marketing narratives were individuals from the favela who, in the eyes of corporations and the non-profits organizations they supported, symbolized the possibility for social transformation brought on by digital technology.

To demonstrate how corporate marketing disguises a set of hidden politics, I recount the life story of a Microsoft spokesman named Wanderson whose journey from drug dealer to digital educator was presented as a symbol of digital technology's socially disruptive potential. By presenting Wanderson as a symbol of disruption, Microsoft's marketing campaign disguised parallels between the ideal of digital inclusion and a security policy in the *favela* called pacification. Pacification policy sought to destabilize a drug dealer controlled "parallel state" by, in part, promoting alternatives to the *favela*'s informal markets and political censorship (see Zaluar 1994). Both corporate narratives concerning digital inclusion and policy narratives concerning pacification encouraged residents to abandon forms of "insurgent" citizenship based in the informal market by adopting new forms of political and economic identity based in the formal market (Holston 2001). With Wanderson's transformation from trafficker to

corporate spokesman in mind, I suggest that digital disruption is not a singular or independent force of change but rather a social process that is tied to a number of political, and economic interests.

In order to see this process and the hidden politics that are involved, this chapter compares Wanderson's life story as told by Microsoft, my own ethnographic experience working as a volunteer at his NGO, and the policy narrative about favela pacification. This comparison reveals how a narrative of digital inclusion is shaped and inspired and how digital disruption is ascribed to specific individuals and events. The narrative constructed around Wanderson's transformation is a prime example of the hidden politics of reproduction in Brazil's pacified *favelas,* in which a corporate narrative of digital inclusion disguises a similar process of securitization, development, and pacification.

From Parallel to Pacified

Microsoft produced a number of videos about the life of Wanderson Skrock. One YouTube video with nearly a million views opens with the image of *favela* children playing in front of heavily armed police officers (Microsoft 2015). A collection of scenes flash on the screen: walls pocked with bullet holes, hilly *favela* landscapes, and a classroom filled with attentive students. Wanderson speaks over these images in English instead of his native Portuguese. The idiomatic choice suggests the videos are intended for an international audience rather than the *favela* that appears on screen. Wanderson recounts growing up in a tightknit *beco* (alleyway). "When I was fourteen, I went to prison. It was there that I was introduced to computers. For the first time I saw opportunity. When I was released I wanted to share that with others. Now I use Microsoft technology to train people to use computers. Education is everything. It gives these kids a chance. Technology saved my life and I believe it can save others."

Microsoft's message is zealous: digital technology has the ability to disrupt entrenched forms of structural inequality, everyday violence, and suffering in Rio de Janeiro's *favelas*. Digital technology appears as a singular force in Wanderson's life, capable of shaping a drug trafficker for the better without the provocation of external historical forces or a broader political will. Wanderson represents *favela* residents, disenfranchised youth, the working class, and educators. Technology, vis-à-vis Microsoft, gave people like Wanderson and communities like the Complexo a chance. The message's presentation is compelling and professional, and Microsoft's video is a clear effort to promote corporate goodwill.

The videos are clearly not intended as a document of digital inclusion's history in Wanderson's community but as a marketing product with the goal of presenting Microsoft as a good corporate citizen. Nonetheless, as an ethnographic observer in the Complexo, I found my experience to be at odds with the video's message, tone, and overall narrative structure. Most notably, the video ignores the security policy called pacification (*pacificação*) that accompanied the most dramatic changes in Wanderson's life, from destabilizing his drug gang to providing him with an incentive to participate in a formal economy. Microsoft conveys the message that change came from digital disruption ("technology saves lives") rather than the more grounded and localized social process that denied Wanderson access to the informal drug economy and forced him into a formal market.[4]

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[4] Drug-related violence in the Complexo often obscured the role of middleclass and elite outsiders in profiting from the drug trade. Despite popular impressions, the *favela*'s drug culture was part and parcel of a larger international drug trade. Elite families use their economic and political clout to import through Brazilian airports and harbors.[4] Theses elites operate the principle drug routes that link Colombia, Peru, and Bolivia cocaine producers and Paraguayan marijuana growers with the European Union. Domestically, Brazil is the world's second largest consumer of cocaine and most likely the largest consumer of products with cocaine as its base such as crack.[4] Middle class drug dealers and consumers are common. Many of my middle class informants, most of who

For the three decades before pacification, the Complexo was dominated by a parallel state drug faction that operated autonomously from Brazil's formal government. By establishing a permanent police presence in the community, pacification policy sought to destabilize imperialistic drug gangs, formalize informal markets, and create new forms of citizenship. Pacification policy infused dozens of Rio's *favelas* with billions of dollars in public and corporate funds. The effects were immediate. Most members of Wanderson's drug gang were imprisoned, killed, or forced into hiding. Thousands of homes were removed, and in their place were built dozens of police precincts, hospitals, and schools. The government issued business licenses, working papers, and housing documents that effectively forgave a history of economic informality in the *favela*. Pacification policy also encouraged an inclusionary discourse among corporate society and politicians, both of whom appeared increasingly comfortable investing money and personnel in *favelas*. Digital inclusion projects played an important part in pacification, in that they allowed corporations to partner with government agencies to provide cost affective and politically neutral social services to the favela. Of the pacified favelas that I lived in and visited, I counted dozens of corporately funded digital inclusion projects, all of which occupied newly built government buildings. However, I found that employees of digital inclusion projects rarely connected their livelihoods to that of pacification policy. When pacification policy became increasingly violent, employees at these projects became increasingly critical of government policy. Despite the desire for political

worked in the activist field of digital inclusion, admitted that their first time in a *favela* involved a drug purchase.

distance from an unpopular policy, digital inclusion projects continued to share many of the same goals of pacification, specifically economic formalization and social inclusion.

Wanderson's life story provides one of the more dramatic examples of how digital inclusion projects shared a tacit connection with pacification policy. Like pacification, Wanderson's representation of digital disruption was built on the aesthetic of inclusion and development (Calvalcanti 2012). Both pacification and digital inclusion sought to involve *favela* residents in a broader political narrative and to destabilize informal economic practices. Both emerged not from debates internal to the *favela,* but instead from outside corporate, political, and activist desires to intervene in a community long seen as separate from mainstream Brazil. Both pacification and digital inclusion oversimplified the role of historic social stigmas in perpetuating Brazil's unequal democracy. And both reflected neocolonial logics that sought to reshape the relationship between institutions and marginalized individuals (Bourdieu 1994, Cunha 2014, Ferguson & Gupta 2002, Lipsky 1980). Despite the dramatic developments spurred by pacification policy and the apparent alternatives to a narrative of digital inclusion, the above description of Wanderson's transformation allowed Microsoft to assert a moral ownership of outside intervention in the Complexo.

For much of the two decades leading up to Wanderson's successful digital inclusion, the drug trade played a central foil to government interventions in the *favela*. Rio's drug gangs emerged during Brazil's dictatorship (1964–85), when political prisoners shared prison space with common criminals. Political prisoners educated *favela* residents in Marxist ideology and insurgent military tactics that they could ostensibly use as a means to wage class war through the drug trade (Penglase 2008). Once out of prison, small time criminals formed increasingly

sophisticated enterprises and began to violently claim *favela* territory street by street. Charismatic gang chiefs (*donos)* emerged to mediate the *favela*'s internal conflicts and to provide services not offered by the Brazilian State. By the 1990s, the Brazilian State and a handful of drug factions maintained parallel forms of sovereignties over urban space. Most of Rio's *favelas* were carved up between three imperial drug factions and scholars described Rio de Janeiro as a "divided city" (Leite 2000; Ventura 1994). For much of the two decades before pacification, Rio de Janeiro was governed by two divergent sets of pubic policy. One set of policies governed Rio's wealthy neighborhoods where the government had greater administrative reach and violent crime was less pronounced. Schools, main roads, and government services were overwhelmingly concentrated in these more formal neighborhoods. In contrast, favelas developed informally and with little public record. While the same laws technically applied in both places, the Brazilian State had far more difficulty controlling the market, providing services, and enforcing the criminal code in the favela.[5]

Drug trafficking organizations appeared state-like in their organization and maintained pseudo-sovereignty over *favela* communities (Zaluar 1992; Leeds 1994; Goldstein 2003; Arias 2006).[6] Following Max Weber's (1918) criteria for a state, the *favela*'s parallel-state drug factions monopolized the use of force. Police made brief and deadly, yet relatively ineffective,

[5] Many favelas, including the Complexo, were not even on official maps of Rio de Janeiro until the arrival of the UPP. Google Maps, the most popular online mapping services at the time of my research, only added a majority of Rio's favelas in 2016 as part of a marketing campaign leading up to the Olympic games. Google partnered with local NGOs to carry out the project but did not send cartographers to the Complexo because the headquarters of a partner NGO was firebombed there a year earlier (Bratia 2018).

[6] A parallel state refers to socio-cultural and political economic segregation rather than a uniform and isolated "culture of poverty."

incursions into *favelas*. Residents saw police as advancing elite interests while drug traffickers were seen as "local level protectors" of *favela* residents (Leeds 1996; Goldstein 2003). They ruled by a Hammurabian "*lei do morro*" ("law of the hill") that prohibited speech about drug traffic. Thieves lost hands, and "X-9"s (informants) were publicly tortured and killed. The threat of force legitimized trafficker control of the *favela* and helped the police to brand drug traffickers as a threat to Brazil's internal sovereignty.

This trafficker-led parallel state was the *favela*'s status quo until Jose Beltrame became Rio's security secretary in 2007, promising to "break the silent non-aggression pact" between police and drug factions (Masson et al. 2007, July 3). For police of Beltrame's generation, drug faction parallel states were a central foil to Brazil's post-dictatorship development. Beltrame, a former Interpol agent who worked as Rio's point man for international law enforcement and intelligence, promised a smarter and more sustainable solution to trafficker-controlled parallel states. He promoted crime labs and information systems that could map out crime as it happened. I.B.M. built their first "Smart City" facility, monitoring big data on social media and coordinating cross-agency police operations. He increased street-level arrests and expanded prison populations (Gaffney 2016). Beltrame also promised to develop a police force, the UPP, that was designed to permanently occupy the most troublesome *favelas*.

Even with the community's official pacification three years away, Beltrame appeared fixated on the Complexo do Alemão. He made dubious claims that 40% of Rio's violent crimes were concentrated around the Complexo, and that more than 30,000 people (nearly half of the community's population in 2010) had lost their lives because of drug violence (Masson et al.

2007, July 3).[7] Soon after Beltrame took office, camouflaged police officers trained by U.S. SWAT units began to make prolonged month-long incursions into the Complexo. Drug factions responded to Beltrame's aggressive tactics by burning buses and, effectively, shutting down the Rio's main thoroughfares for hours at a time. With growing calls from the public to stem the unrest, Beltrame saw a chance to test a sustained form of pacification policy in Santa Marta, a small *favela* in the heart of Rio's wealthy Zona Sul. After a brief operation, the government presented Santa Marta's pacification as a viable laboratory to test a sustained anti-gang policy that could be applied to larger communities such as the Complexo. Beginning at that moment, pacification policy guided all other conversations of outside intervention into the *favela*.

Beltrame described pacification as a policy that would destabilize criminal actors while addressing the humanitarian needs of a former parallel state.[8] Although he called it a "made in

[7]These claims are rather problematic. The Complexo's official population in 2010 was slightly more than 69,000. I found no statistical proof that almost a third of the Complexo was killed over the course of 25 years. Furthermore, the Complexo is slightly larger in area than the campus of the University of Colorado in a city that is 200 times the area.

[8] Institutional support for Rio's pacification project begin to take shape in the early 2000s when Brazil's federal government attempted to diminish the political authority of the military and police while, at the same time, promoted Brazil's role as a global security partner. The most notable example of this was Brazil's participation in the 2004 U.S.-backed ouster of Haiti's first democratically-elected president, Jean-Bertrand Aristide. Policy makers often referred to the operation the "pacification" of Haiti. Haitians accused the UN-backed Brazilian military of being stooges for transnational corporations that sought to guarantee resource extraction, enforce debilitating debt, and, ultimately, maintain desperate living standards. Haitians accused Brazilian troops of rape, pedophilia, kidnapping, and murder. Prophetic of Rio's pacification program, Brazilian troops targeted the poorest neighborhoods of Port au Prince. They entered guns blazing and left only dead bodies and bullet-pocked homes behind. The U.S. military trained Brazil's officers to take the lead in Haiti and created a pipeline of Brazilian military officers with knowledge of state-building and intelligence gathering. The Brazilian military's 10-year 'humanitarian mission', of which Brazil held a leadership role, included a catastrophic earthquake and hurricane in 2010. The mission was generally deemed a success and even gave Brazil ruling coalition aspirations for a permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council. For reference see:
http://www.bbc.com/portuguese/noticias/2014/05/140526_brasil_haiti_analise_hb
http://anovademocracia.com.br/no-60/2560-delegacao-de-haitianos-denuncia-exercito-brasileiro

Brazil" method, Beltrame drew inspirations from "zero tolerance" or "broken windows" policies from the global north that focused on reducing small everyday crimes that supported a larger criminal culture. The strategy of developing local networks of informants and attempting to stem minor crimes was credited with reducing homicide rates by more than 50% in New York and London (Brogden 2005).[9] He also drew from a promising community-policing model from Colombia called *Seguridad Democrática* (Democratic Security) that destabilized traffickers in the country's impoverished *comunas*. Most importantly, the policy proved popular among Brazil's elite who found Beltrame's goals to be in line with their vision of the country's neoliberal future. Beltrame described a long-term process involving intense institutional investment and economic formalization. He presented pacification to the public as a community-policing program with the practical goal of destabilizing drug traffic and shepherding socio-economic development in Rio's *favela*. Beltrame's new police force, *the Unidade de Policia Pacificaodor,* or the UPP, was trained from the ground up as a security organization that was independent of traditional military police institutions. [10] The UPP operated under a command structure separate from the regular *polícia militar* (military police) who were historically responsible for street-level policing and larger *megaoperações* (mega-operations). Internally, the UPP was organized into two parts: the UPP and the *UPP Social*. The UPP handled security concerns while the *UPP Social* organized public services and policy

[9] The U.S. Government also offered training and equipment including decommissioned armored troop carriers to the Brazilian military. http://g1.globo.com/politica/noticia/2015/10/exercito-ganha-dos-eua-em-doacao-50-blindados-de-guerra-usados.html

[10] There are several notable analysis of the UPP including Burgos et al. (2011), Ramos (2011), Cano (2012), Cavalcanti (2013), Leite and Machado da Silva (2013), Oliveira (2014), Abramovay and Castro (2014), Leite (2014), Heilborn, Faya and Souza (2014) and Araújo Silva and Carvalho (2015)

analysis. The *UPP Social* consulted neighborhood association presidents, church leaders, and NGO-based activists, and presented the humanitarian side of Beltrame's military operation.

The UPP was charged with two broad conceptual goals. First, it sought to legitimize the state's presence in the *favela* through increased contact between the police and the community. In 2007, a police officer from Rio de Janeiro was arrested every 25 hours (Mendoça 2007). Their crimes ranged from homicide and illegal possession of firearms to extortion. Beltrame believed that with a new police force, traditional forms of corruption could be circumvented and the *favela*'s faith in the police could be restored. Second, the UPP hoped to strengthen the power of state actors such as city planners, healthcare providers, and local politicians that could help bring regulatory order to the favela. Furthermore, Brazil's infamous bureaucratic sluggishness created hundreds of thousands of unprosecuted criminal complaints against police, leaving them unpopular in the eyes of most citizens, demoralized, and institutionally stagnant. The UPP promised to be more responsive to the community, free of institutional corruption, and, most importantly, to act as a constant threat to the ethics and economies of the drug-trafficker parallel state.

The Complexo do Alemão was officially pacified in 2010, two years after the pacification of Santa Marta. A book authored by two police and a state prosecutor described that day as "the retaking of the Complexo do Alemão" ("*a retomada do Complexo do Alemão*") and a "conquest" for the Brazilian state (Monteiro, Greco, and Betini 2013). A citywide fall in crime rates between 2005 and 2012 supported the idea that pacification policy was effectively combating violence in the *favela* (Ferraz & Ottoni 2013).

The praise of pacification proved short-lived. In contrast to the military's pomp and the dominant state's transformative narrative, the actual achievements of the Complexo's pacification were more symbolic than substantive. The day of the Complexo's official pacification, police apprehended ten tons of marijuana but only arrested eight of the supposed hundreds of drug traffickers in the community (Costa et al. 2011). The initial declarations of military conquest also failed to consider long-term security issues, such as shifts in the dynamic of violence between drug traffic, the police, and the community. Activists from the *favela* began to describe pacification as *maquiagem* (cosmetic) in that it allowed Brazilian society to avoid more substantive conversations about racial prejudice and socio-economic segregation.

Pacification followed a history of public policies that treated the *favela* as a politically and socially isolated entity in need of outside intervention. Forced removals of *favela* residents, like those that began to take place after pacification, were common features of Brazil's dictatorships, which also defended State violence with promises of social progress, hygiene, and security. These interventions favored the prerogatives of the Brazilian State and entrenched a differentiated form of citizenship in the *favela*.

Many of the social projects to arrive in the Complexo after pacification reflected previous models of outside intervention that sought a viable alternative to the drug-dealer parallel state, to encourage new forms of *favela* citizenship and philosophies of democratic participation, and to bring the community's politics in line with the rest of Brazilian society. This outside-looking-in perspective appeals to what Oscar Lewis (1959) calls a "culture of poverty." Lewis claims that impoverished communities develop unique cultural understandings and practices that help to perpetuate their marginalized place in society. For Lewis, socio-economic

segregation is the result of an inability of the poor to adapt to middle- and upper-class social practices (Goode 2001, 177), and government interventions often fail because the poor lack the necessary knowledge, ability, and self-awareness to take on change. Projects like digital inclusion were designed to resolve many of these issues, with marginalized individuals gaining the knowledge and skills necessary to interact with a dominant society.

By implying the need for outside intervention to provoke positive change, some have argued that the culture of poverty model encourages a victim-blaming logic (Bourgois 2001). Janice Perlman's (1971) ethnographic observations of forced removals in 1960s' Rio provide one of the most pointed critiques of the "culture of poverty" model. Pearlman found that policies which conceptualized the *favela* as an isolated subculture within Brazil led to some of the most violent police interventions and forced removals. For Pearlman, the culture of poverty model's theory of exclusion fails to account for a wide range of outside social, political, and economic influences that shape marginalized worldviews in the *favela*. Instead of viewing this culture as cut off from wider society, Pearlman asserts, "socially, [*favela* residents] are well organized and cohesive and they make wide use of the urban milieu and its institutions" (Perlman 1971, 242–43). More modern interventions that seek to tackle drug trafficking and landed informality also tend to blame *favela* communities for the violence they suffer (Zaluar e Alvito 1998; Leeds 1998; Misse 1999). Responding to critiques of the culture of poverty model, however, some scholars argue that Lewis's model, while imperfect, offers important insight into how the poor make their own meanings, find agency despite marginality, and adapt to domination as a means of survival (Goode 2001; Goldstein 2003). Considering the culture of poverty model myself, I see Microsoft's portrayal of Wanderson as an example of both the

objectifying nature of outside intervention, and the reaction of citizens who live in the margins finding a means to survive in an unequal society. The infusion of digital technology into Wanderson's life, for example, gave him the knowledge, ability, and self-consciousness to challenge the oppressive causes of marginality.

The cultural logic suggested by the narrative of Wanderson's individual transformation can be traced to political movements in 1980s Brazil when, following the return of democracy, the country's civil society slowly altered the "criteria for the admission to political life" (Holston 1999, 137). While the country embraced a democratic discourse, the promise of inclusion often conflicted with a more historical manifestation of prejudice and social exclusion. James Holston describes Brazil's working class as an "insurgent citizenship" that uses "autoconstruction," or the informal construction of homes and communities, in order to cultivate a marginalized form of democratic citizenship. Insurgent citizens were working class Brazilians that fought for "the rights and dignity of democratic citizenship rather than...patronage, favor, or revolution" (Holston 2008, 230). In this sense, autoconstruction is not just a material act of building one's home, but a political act that allows marginalized communities to establish a sense of political citizenship.

While Holston frames insurgent citizenship in terms of São Paulo's working class (*clase trabalhador*), these qualities can be found in Microsoft's telling of Wanderson's life. Favela residents who autoconstruct their homes and former drug dealers like Wanderson symbolize a similar sense of differentiated citizenship. Like the working class, drug dealers were provoked by poverty and institutional abandonment to subvert the rule of law. Both workers and traffickers feared the state-centric violence that results from the subversion of the rule of law,

such as forced removals. Like autoconstruction's ability to generate democratic moralities in an unequal democracy, participation in the Complexo's drug trade provided an opportunity to gain cultural and economic capital. Through their influence on the day-to-day of *favela* life, parallel-state drug gangs influenced ideas of "good citizenship," and drug dealing ultimately reflected a set of ethical dilemmas thrust upon *favela* youth (Savell 2015). The Complexo's drug faction normalized and gave value to an informal market, allowing a young Wanderson to imagine a morally and ethically informed life as a participant in the Complexo's drug trade.

Nonetheless, Wanderson's participation in the drug trade was more ethically problematic than the autoconstruction of urban space. The terms *bandido* and *traficante* are broadly applied to *favela* youth who participate in the drug trade, a fact that ignores individual agency by fashioning a ready-made enemy of the Brazilian state—and this enemy can be eliminated or, at very least, pacified. Erika Robb-Larkins, invoking Giorgio Agamben (1997) describes how dominant state actors rationalize the suspension of qualified life in pacified favelas; "the imagination and construction of traffickers (and *favela* residents more broadly) as killable, disposable bodies is at the heart of the ideology of exception in Rio" (Robb-Larkins 2013, 556). Suspected criminals killed annually by Rio's police force in "acts of resistance" ("*ato de resitencia"*) reached an all-time high in 2007 at 1,113 (Granja 2011; Lethal Force 2015). Prejudice towards *favela* traffickers paralleled other neo-colonial conflicts where sovereign authority was maintained by defining internal enemies and by exerting control in marginalized communities (Stuppetat & Hansen 2005). Though conflating workers with drug dealers on a policy level had deadly consequences, Rio's police were encouraged to use increasingly violent tactics with impunity.

Both pacification and digital inclusion developed in the mid-2000s when public and political discourse produced more sympathetic representations of Brazil's insurgent *favela* citizens. The rise of left-leaning political parties, such as the Workers' Party, allowed *favela* residents to be increasingly humanized as an ascendant and essential part of Brazilian society. The insurgent citizen who auto-constructed land, the worker who provided the sweat necessary for progress, and the trafficker who scraped by on the urban periphery, all once ignored or demonized by Brazil's democracy, were now essential to its inclusionary narrative. However, positive examples of inclusion were often qualified not by democratic standards—an equally applied legal and political apparatus—but rather by the ability of the community to transform along new security and economic paradigms. Policymakers asked residents to identify and report suspicious activity, instructing them to get working papers and pay taxes, and encouraging them to engage with a broader Brazilian society through community-based organizations.

Wanderson's position as an ex-trafficker-turned-digital-educator made him an ideal agent of the pacified *favela*: a profoundly marginalized individual ready for transformation under a new social, political, and economic order. Wanderson was not alone with his transformative story, and he reflected a popular trope of the reformed *malandro* (scoundrel) who transformed from the undignified marginal into a dignified worker (Misse 2005). After pacification, there was a viral spread of online content concerning the social transformation of *favela* residents. Ex-convicts started businesses. Ex-traffickers worked with NGOs to get younger traffickers off the street. They became evangelical pastors or artists or musicians. Stories of the reformed *malandro* were effective in that they opposed a historical imagination

of marginality in Brazil and embraced a popular hope that both *favela* residents and drug traffickers could be integrated into mainstream Brazilian society.

Many of the *favela* residents who I spoke with often complained that dominant representations of life and opportunity in the pacified *favela* obscured more "authentic" representations of Rio's differentiated democracy. With pacification policy's destabilization of major drug factions, institutional actors led by the UPP took up the mantel of the Complexo's most violent actors. Pacification produced a spectacle of violence—through police operations—that has since delegitimized state authority for many *favela* residents (Larkins 2013). The majority of homicides that took place in the Complexo during my research were carried out by police against innocent residents or local drug dealers. *Favela* residents witnessed this on a daily basis, as police blindly pointed rifles down alleyways, rarely spoke or made eye-contact with residents, and arbitrarily shot at cars, light posts, and exterior walls.

Four years after the Complexo's official pacification, coinciding with the time that I began to live in the Complexo, an uptick in violence undermined the policy's humanitarian promises of the *favela*'s inclusion. Although destabilized, traffickers continued as visible fixtures of post-pacification street life. Street-level violence was cut in half but remained ever-present and appeared less predictable than under the rule of drug gangs. During my time in the Complexo, there were dozens of deaths resulting from drug violence, and many of the victims were innocent bystanders killed by a *bala perdida* (stray bullet). At one point in 2015, the Complexo witnessed a hundred straight days of shootouts. Police violence often went unpunished or was justified by government spokespeople as a tragedy of context. For *favela* residents, the state failed pacification's most central goal: to reduce *favela* violence by

destabilizing drug gangs. Even Beltrame, pacification's chief architect, declared the policy a failure and called for the decriminalization of many drug offenses. The return of daily violence in the Complexo appeared, to many residents, as a means for maintaining political crisis rather than to integrate those on the margins of society (Zilberg 2011).

Digital technology would play an alternatively transformative role in the context of continued violence by allowing local activists to critique the suffering produced by pacification policy. As I will discuss in later chapters, many locals believed digital technology was a way to challenge the State while also sharing in its benefits. The Internet and social media, in addition to giving hope and providing formal institutional connections, allowed residents to document violence and provide a counter-narrative to the euphemistic government narrative of pacification. Microsoft and the NGOs it used as proxies were no doubt aware of the broader culture of hope that was built around the *favela* under pacification. What I found ethnographically valuable was how Wanderson's supporters sculpted the image of a digitally disruptive ex-drug dealer, and often used this image to obscure the more problematic aspects of pacification.

Wanderson and the Parallel State

Over the course of my research from 2014 to 2016, I volunteered at the NGO *Committee for Digital Inclusion* (CDI). CDI introduced digital technology to hundreds of thousands of *favela* residents and partnered with some of the world's most powerful corporations. Wanderson was a well-respected fieldworker for CDI, and his image was key to how the NGO presented their work to the world. I witnessed him and others tell the story of his digital re-birth to corporations, international NGOs, and politicians as an example of CDI's brand of digital

disruption in Brazil's *favelas*. Neatly framed pictures of Wanderson hung around CDI's remodeled nineteenth-century French eclectic row house, next to pictures of CDI's founder, work by world-renowned artist Vik Muniz, and quotes from Gandhi etched in frosted glass. His transformation represented the disruptive power of CDI and helped the NGO win millions of dollars in funding from companies like Microsoft and Dell.

After learning that I lived and carried out research in the Complexo do Alemão, one of my co-workers at CDI told me, "you should talk to Wanderson. He's from the Complexo and used to sell drugs." While I often found this frankness surprising, I quickly learned that Wanderson's identity as an ex-trafficker was essential to his reputation at CDI.

It took me several months to meet Wanderson and speak to him directly about his work at CDI. He spent his time traveling around Brazil and abroad. When he returned, I found myself eating lunch every day with him and his co-workers around CDI's cramped kitchen table. He was one of the more charismatic personalities in the room, often leading the table's conversations and providing anecdotes from his travels. While we talked, a television broadcasted noontime reports about football and crime. I used the televised crime reports as an opportunity to ask Wanderson about his time as a trafficker and his opinions about *favela*-related issues. Over the course of several dozen lunches I learned the details of his life that failed to appear in Microsoft's public relations campaign. I learned about his arrival in the Complexo at four years old. He told me, "I remember how crowded the Complexo felt. The winding alleyways that go up the hill." He sometimes discussed the violence that defined his early childhood. The year he arrived, 1994, the Complexo was being divided by a territorial war between two rival drug factions. Rio recorded 4,081 homicides that year, many of them

resulting principally from *favela*-based drug violence (Zdun 2011). Although he was enrolled in a state school, Wanderson could rarely attend because shootouts had either blocked his path or forced teachers to suspend classes. He spent these days playing in his *bequinho* (little alleyway). One day when he was eight years old, he witnessed his first shootout while playing with friends outside of his house (Author's Field Notes December 2015).

Wanderson's eventual entrance into the drug trade paralleled what Philippe Bourgois (1995) describes as a search for respect that opposed demeaning socio-economic conditions and a lack of dignified work—or, as Wanderson put it: "I wanted money and friends." Wanderson described his reason for joining the gang as "Just for fun. Just flying kites." At eight years old he became an *olheiro* (lookout), flying his kite and lighting firecrackers to announce the arrival of drug deliveries, the police, and rival drug gangs. Before he turned thirteen, he transitioned quickly from *avião* (delivery boy), to *soldado* (soldier) with a handgun, to *vapor* (street dealer). Low in the parallel state's hierarchy and working in entry-level sales positions, Wanderson avoided shootouts and arrest. He made R$200–300 (US$67–100) a week, which, at the time of my research ten years later, was four times the average income for the Complexo.

He was arrested once, went to jail, and, under Brazil's relatively lenient juvenile criminal code, was quickly released. Wanderson returned to the Complexo and was promoted to *gerente* (manager) of a *boca* (distribution point). The work was simple and relatively monotonous.

> I received cocaine, marijuana. They would come in big packages. A few kilos. I separated it into ten reais (~US$2.50), 30 reais (~US$7.50). So it could be sold individually.... I worked 60 hours a week. Sorting and standing on the street…. Sometimes I went to the *baile (dance)*.... But it was work. I learned loyalty for my boss…. I never lacked the truth. I was a person that always told the truth. I also learned a lot about accounting, all the math that I didn't get in school. [He paused

> and chuckled.] Most importantly, I learned to mediate conflicts. (Author's Field Notes December 2015)

Wanderson found the fact that he learned important skills amusing given the violent reputation of the drug traffickers and the possibility that each conflict could involve dozens of young men with weapons.

After meeting Wanderson and becoming involved in his work, I found myself discussing his life story with my informants from the Complexo. I showed them social media pictures of Wanderson and they would often laugh and call into question the authenticity of his story based on his appearance. More specifically, my informants explained how Wanderson's skin color and his dress did not align with local racialized notions of drug traffickers. These aesthetic expectations aligned were based on well-discussed prejudices experienced by dark skinned men from the favela. According to a report written by Amnesty International, victims of police homicides in Brazil were 99.5% male, 79% black, 75% youth between the ages of 15 and 29, and usually from a *favela* (Lemos 2013). Wanderson's appearance—*branco* (white) or possibly *pardo* (lighter skinned), *louro* (blonde), and *olho azuis* (blue eyes)—contrasted with popular representations of Rio's drug traffickers. Crime in Brazil is often represented and experienced in racial terms (Adorno 1997, Drybread 2014, Goldstein 2003, Penglase 2011). As a light-skinned man, Wanderson's experience as a drug trafficker avoided the daily prejudices faced by others in the predominantly afro-Brazilian Complexo. I frequently heard complaints from Complexo residents about how corporate news sources described light skin drug offenders in terms of middleclassness (de *clase meia*) and education (*universitários,* or university students), while

they presented black *favela* youth simply as *traficantes* (traffickers).[11] As a lighter skinned man, Wanderson could circumvent racial prejudice through the embrace of dominant markers of education and market participation. This racial passing, something that appeared both unintentional and aesthetically convenient for Microsoft, prompted some of my informants to question the authenticity of Wanderson's message of digital inclusion. My informants also questioned his ability to represent the favela regardless of skin color. I showed them Wanderson's profile from social media, and the videos produced by Microsoft, and over the course of dozens of conversations, they often expressed their disbelief that he had been a drug trafficker once I had show them Microsoft's videos. They sometimes pointed to his clothes: jeans and a polo shirt, or gelled hair, as markers of difference. Often, residents of the Complexo laughed and said that Wanderson looked like a "playboy" or *crente* (devout evangelical). Because of popular beliefs relating to class and racial aesthetics, they struggled to imagine him as a drug trafficker.

Beyond physical attributes that made Complexo residents hesitate to accept Wanderson's story as authentic, I could not find a local activist in the community who knew him personally or professionally. This was surprising to me, given that the Complexo's activist community was inclusionary and tight knit, and found a common identity through a narrative of digital transformation. Despite millions of video views on social media and speeches in front of thousands at Microsoft events, Wanderson had not shared his story with the community he hoped most to support.

[11] See http://veja.abril.com.br/noticia/brasil/mpf-denuncia-cinco-por-droga-encontrada-em-helicoptero-dos-perrella

I mention these doubts and incongruences not to call into question the veracity of Wanderson's experiences as a drug trafficker or to suggest that his transformation was an insignificant experience. Rather, I see Wanderson's anonymity within the community as an example of how his narrative of digital inclusion was shaped by outside actors and meant for non-local audience. The racialized and classed issues tied to his identity within the *favela*, I believe, demonstrate that Microsoft intended his message for non-*favela*, non-Brazilian, and international audiences that would more easily consume the image of a light-skinned, smartly-dressed, and highly-educated young man. Microsoft and CDI's goal was not to apply Wanderson's example to the world, but to market Microsoft's brand as in line with positive occurrences in the *favela* and other marginalized communities. For those at Microsoft and CDI who embraced his story of transformation, being an ex-trafficker was Wanderson's most important quality. Narrative inconveniences relating to issues such as Wanderson's appearance and presence in the community were conveniently glossed over for a narrative of digital disruption in a parallel state.

Wanderson and Pacification

Over one lunch at CDI, I sat with Wanderson as he gave me a minute-by-minute account of his second arrest. That morning, he had awoken in his home to the sound of fireworks popping nearby. They warned of a surprise police operation. "There was an operation, and shootouts with the police everywhere. I grabbed two handguns" (Author's Field Notes October 2014). Hanging his hands over a plate of ground beef and yucca puree as he spoke to me, he tested the weight of two phantom guns.

> I grabbed as much money as I could and I hid. I threw everything in a backpack and ran to a friend's house to hide myself. Someone probably pointed me out. The police searched houses and they knew where I was. I was huddled on the

> floor when they found me. That was it. Everyone got arrested. My boss. My friends. It was over.

At the time of his arrest, Wanderson thought he would spend the remainder of his youth in an adult prison and return to the community to continue as a drug dealer. He had little reason to believe his time in prison would be a positive experience.

Over another lunch at CDI, a television news story aired about overcrowding at Rio's juvenile detention center in the Bangu neighborhood. Wanderson mentioned to me that the report discussed a building where he served both of his prison terms. I asked if his time was as crowded as what was shown on television. "It was a difficult moment for me. I never had to do this, stay in one place the whole time. Not being able to choose where I could go. You know? They beat you in prison. They don't give you a bed, just sheets on the floor. There's no toilet. Just a hole in the ground. I was without perspective."(Author's Field Notes October 2014)

According to Wanderson, "All they had was a library and I don't read books much. There were no high school or other classes. The computer room was the only option." Although he was somewhat familiar with other digital technology, such as cell phones and video games, before he entered prison, the CDI-run computer course was the first time he touched a personal computer. He described how he learned "the basic things" one needs to know to use a desktop computer, like using Microsoft Word. When describing the course to me, he stressed skills beyond the technical aspects of the course and paraphrased a quote from Gandhi, "I learned I could be the change that I wanted for the world. I could help people and make others feel like they weren't just prisoners."

As Wanderson indicated in our lunchtime discussion of life in prison, without a digital inclusion program to guide his way, his time in prison would have reflected the evolution of

carceral rationales over the previous two hundred years. Much like prisons throughout the modern world, Rio's prisons focused on security and containment over reform and education (Foucault 1979; Feeley & Simon 1992; Garland 2001; Simon 2007; Cunha 2014). Brazil underwent a carceral boom between 1992 and 2012 with prison populations more than quadrupling. A "*favela*-prison" pipeline was structured around the idea of punishing individuals from Brazil's periphery (Larkins 2015). The Frei Caneca, Rio's only prison that prioritized reform and education, and where CDI had one of its first programs, had been demolished a few years before Wanderson's arrest in order to build a downtown housing project. The remaining prisons expanded but quickly became overcrowded. By installing a permanent anti-gang police in Rio's largest *favelas*, pacification policy also helped to swell the prison population and drew resources away from more reformative efforts. The technology course that Wanderson took part in was a rare experiment in and return to prison education and a principle example of what steps some in civil society took to reform rather than punish criminal offenders from Rio's favela.

Encouraged by his experience in the computer course, Wanderson volunteered to be an educator for CDI's next round of prison workshops. He led his fellow inmates through the basics of computer use. Wanderson remembers a fellow prisoner who stood up in a workshop and said, "I think when I become a computer teacher, just like you, I'll know how to give good classes." While speaking in front of classes and meetings, Wanderson frequently mentioned that this was the most important moment of his life. He wanted to inspire other young people, pull them from the depths of marginality, and show them that they had opportunities beyond what society had given them. The interaction between educator and student was particularly

important in the narratives that CDI and Microsoft presented about Wanderson's digital transformation. A post on Microsoft's website titled "Back in Prison but Not Behind Bars" tells of the impact that this interaction had on Wanderson. "Wanderson isn't so different from the young man he taught. The drive to help others surpasses nearly everything else…. He is living proof that change is not only possible; it's within reach of even the most dis-advantaged Brazilian." (Microsoft n.d.).

This anecdote demonstrates how Microsoft omitted the role pacification policy played in forcing Wanderson into prison and defining his rights and opportunities afterwards. While pacification may not have given Wanderson hope, like Microsoft and CDI did, he was nonetheless shaped by a set of policies that placed him in prison and provided him with limited stimulation while there. Wanderson's transformation from a trafficker into an educator reflected the disruptive possibilities of both digital technology and pacification. He transcended the historical social limits of a prisoner, trafficker, and insurgent citizen and found a place as an educator in a formal society. It would be difficult to imagine any of this happening without pacification policy. The Microsoft's corporate representatives chose to hide the politics of pacification in favor of a narrative that highlighted the potentials of digital technology to shape individual's lives. This reflects not only the distance between multinational corporations and the everyday life of *favelas*, but also the transformative faith that they bestow upon their products for the purpose of marketing.

Representing Pacification

In late 2014, CDI's communication director asked me to guide a film crew who had been hired by Microsoft around the Complexo. My co-workers at CDI told me that Wanderson felt uncomfortable returning to the Complexo and implied that it would be inappropriate for us to

broach the subject to him. There was also concern on the part of CDI and Microsoft that Wanderson would be mistaken as a police informant or a returning drug dealer, drawing threats from whichever group he was not associated with, given the fact that he had not lived in the community since his last arrest. This might have sabotaged CDI's future work in the community. I agreed to help and told them that I would be happy to observe how Microsoft and CDI actively shaped a narrative of digital disruption in a pacified *favela*.

The crew consisted of all non-*favela* people: a middle-class Brazilian producer, an American director, a German cameraman, and myself, an American ethnographer. Without Wanderson present, I quickly realized that Microsoft lacked a representative from Complexo that could take part in the production of the video. The two non-Brazilian members of the crew had spent the last year traveling the world producing inspirational videos for Microsoft and had just returned from an extended trip around Asia. I asked Tia Bete, a disarming, motherly, and well-known figure who had carried out 30 years of activist work in the Complexo, to guide us around the Complexo. Bete was happy to help and joked that "they wouldn't know how to film without me."(Author's Field Notes December 2014)

Per Bete's suggestion, we met the crew at a sporting complex built just after pacification called the *Vila Olimpica* (Olympic Village). The crew arrived in a large Mercedes rental van full of tens of thousands of dollars in camera equipment. After a quick introduction, they began to film a group of children playing on the *Vila Olimpica*'s concrete *futebol* court. We then went to Bete's home, the NGO Oca dos Curumins, where she had hosted a cultural center and literacy program over the last few decades. It was her grandson's tenth birthday and the crew filmed him playing soccer in front of the Oca. The crew then flew a small camera drone over the

Complexo's stadium-sized valley. I warned the crew that they should be cautious not to startle residents, police, or drug traffickers. Implying that their small camera drone was in danger, I reminded them that traffickers were known to shoot down police helicopters. The crew's director had spent the last few years filming inspirational videos for Microsoft in slums around the world and told me that while filming in Mumbai he learned to navigate children flying kites. The German assistant pointed towards his chest, "We have press badges. They aren't going to do anything" (Author's Field Notes December 2014). I could not help but recognize the crew's assumptions of privilege and security and note how these attitudes opposed what many from the Complexo would have felt. Most residents would have avoided the police and been cautious in challenging the rules relating to public engagement with the drug trade. Bete, for example, had repeatedly told me to avoid police officers if possible and to never assume that they would respect my rights. Furthermore, the crew acknowledged the presence of state authorities in the community by pointing to their press badges and filming images of police officers, suggesting they were conscious of a general security situation in the *favela*. I assumed that the Brazilian crewmember in particular had to at least have been witness to weeklong national television coverage of the Complexo's pacification, and how this had shaped socio-economic opportunity in the community.

Bete appeared motivated to present a positive image of the community and took the crew the Complexo's most secure and developed areas. We went to a plaza where the government had built a cinema, a large digital inclusion NGO, and a public grade school constructed after pacification. The crew filmed a group of children as they ran up and down a

snug alleyway under Bete's stage direction. These images would be repeated several times throughout the three videos that Microsoft eventually produced.

Soon after filming children at the school and in the alleyway, the director noticed three male teenagers looking on from a distance, who appeared to be sending text messages on their smartphones. He asked if Bete could invite them over so he could film them. The cameraman told me that they appeared to be drug dealers "managing their territory," while the producer told me that the teens, "probably thought we were police informants."(Author's Field Notes December 2014) After speaking with Bete, the teenagers politely refused, laughed, and shook their heads for the director to see. Once she walked back to the director, Bete said the conversation was noticeably short, cautious, and a non-starter. Even though no one expressed it directly, I believed that the director wanted to capture images of young men that were the same age as Wanderson when he was a drug trafficker. The crew had spent the majority of the day filming children playing in the street but needed older individuals who represented the young adult community. In terms of a larger narrative of digital inclusion, images of a group of young men represented the world that Microsoft and CDI sought to disrupt.

A few months after I guided the crew around the Complexo, Microsoft released an initial three-minute video. The opening title read "In A Place Where Little Hope Remains…One Man Inspires"(Microsoft 2015a). Wanderson appeared on screen in a *favela* that is not the Complexo. He spoke in Portuguese and described working as a drug dealer, his time in prison, and how he had lacked the motivation to leave a life of crime. The video cut to the founder of CDI, who praised Microsoft's help in making Brazil a better place. Then the video cut to one of Wanderson's former students. She weeps and tells the camera how hard it is to live with the

violence in her community, and how Wanderson's guidance made life easier. Wanderson spent the final minute of the video praising the transformative power of Microsoft technology. The video ended with a bombastic title screen: "Microsoft and the work we do, saving lives across the globe" (Microsoft 2015a).

The film crew's final product mirrored a common narrative concerning outside intervention in the *favela* and ignored important details that would have complicated Microsoft's marketing claims to this narrative. Most notably, the video omitted the fact that Wanderson could no longer live in the *favela* and that he was not present for filming in the Complexo. His digital disruption, in this more direct sense, required being physically removed from the social context that produces marginality. The video also disguised the perspectives of those who were responsible for producing the video. Even while Wanderson could not be present in the Complexo, the crew who recorded his story was unfamiliar with the community and its politics. Their perspectives were often general, making superficial comparisons to issues in Mumbai and avoiding the other considerations that could threaten their production such as violence from drug traffickers. Bete was the only local to participate in the production of the video, and the film avoided her opinions of social inclusion, the experiences that informed her politics, and her goals as a community organizer. Notably, the video neglected any reference to pacification, a policy that most in the community directly linked with the destabilization of the drug-dealer parallel state. The goal of the video was principally to promote the transcendent nature of digital technology and imply that it could surpass the difficult experiences of poor communities across the globe. Wanderson's community, one that he could not longer live in, provided a convenient context to present this message. The politics behind Wanderson's

transformation and the politics behind the transformation of others in his community were all but ignored. This corporate logic and corporate image making, one could argue, makes digital disruption a much more ideological goal than a practical one for marginalized communities struggling with entrenched gang violence.

When I spoke with Wanderson about pacification, he embraced a narrative of inclusion but also, when asked, had a critical interpretation of the changes in his community. As I discuss for the remainder of this dissertation, many in the *favela* believed that the state's initial presentation of pacification was overly optimistic. Like Wanderson, critics saw the policy as *maquiagem* (cosmetics) that allowed the state to distract from more pressing issues like police violence or the differentiated application of democratic rights. More cynical observers thought that pacification, at least in terms of the state's definition of the program, was impossible. These critiques questioned the state's promises of social projects, public housing, improved transportation, expanded hospitals, and a more responsive government.

A few months after guiding the film crew through the Complexo, I ate a final lunch with Wanderson and we discussed the video-making process. I mentioned my concerns that Microsoft may be misrepresenting his life, his community, and the causality behind his transformation. He understood my critique and argued that his personal transformation was distinct from his experiences with pacification. He saw pacification in a negative light and digital inclusion as an unquestionable social good. He suggested that Microsoft and others omitted a discussion of security policy principally because of its association with violence. Nonetheless, he agreed that the security policy had a significant influence on the Complexo and his opportunities after prison. He did not want to give any positive credit, however, to a

pacification policy that he associated with death, violence, and imprisonment. Regardless of whether Wanderson and I share a sense of causation between digital inclusion and pacification, it was clear that he had a far more nuanced understanding of the politics that inspired his personal transformation than his work with Microsoft expressed. Digital inclusion, for Wanderson, was not an isolated process that took place through the singular force of information technology. Rather, he recognized his transformation as a combination of numerous events and outcomes with digital technology as a specifically positive force.

While promoting his narrative of digital inclusion, Wanderson was also critical of the transformative narrative that the government spread concerning pacification. "The police come with a really strong process of change." Referring to the World Cup and Olympics he continued,

> the games are a government interest. The UPP is just a cover-up [*maquiagem*] for all the older problems. When I lived in the Complexo, the police only wanted to earn money from *maquinas de casinique* [casino slot machines] and receive bribes from traffickers. Everyone knew that the police did this. The system needs to be reformed with all of the police receiving new training, not just the UPP. Reform has to be more than guns. Armed like this, the residents just see another, less familiar, drug faction. They have to demilitarize the police. They have to be smart. It's not the fault of the soldiers or the traffickers. They too are victims. The state is playing a game of chess and the police and traffickers are pawns. (Author's Field Notes, March 2015)

At the same time that Wanderson critiqued the state's narrative of security, he also embraced a narrative of individual responsibility that had been promoted alongside both pacification policy and digital inclusion. "People in the *favela* are not used to police. Everyone has to re-learn how to live together. Everyone from the community has to be re-educated as well." Wanderson supported the governing logic of pacification for many of the same reasons he embraced the transformative potentials of digital technology. Furthermore, he also saw the best path forward for the *favela* as one emerging from respect for the Brazilian state and its police. He believed

that the violent nature of pacification policy made peace impossible and noted how an unpopular UPP changed its name to *Rio+Social* in order to avoid a negative association with the security-oriented UPP. Wanderson explained to me, mirroring the opinion of many Complexo residents, that

> [t]he police need to talk to the community, they are supposed to talk to the community. Growing up in the community, I never saw the police as someone I could talk to. Pacification promised that the police would talk with the community. Now, it seems like they only want to talk with their guns. (From Author's Field Notes March 2015)

For Wanderson, violence made pacification policy antithetical to the inclusionary goals that it set out to achieve, and that it shared with digital inclusion projects.

Later in the conversation, Wanderson also suggested that Microsoft's influence on his life was accidental and that other opportunities could have led him down an equally transformative path. Most ex-traffickers, rather than being given employment opportunities by corporations or NGOs, were forced into manual labor. According to Wanderson, most traffickers would be happy to leave a life of crime and find value through more legitimate work. "Traffickers want their sons to be police officers, not drug dealers, workers with working papers. They understand the limits of the drug gang and hope that one day they can find hope beyond it." As Wanderson suggests, of the thousands of individuals who participated in the Complexo's drug trade over the previous ten years, there is a possibility that most would have accepted more legitimate work if the opportunity was available.

Wanderson's critique of pacification contrasts with the narratives put forth by both policymakers and Microsoft. Representatives of Microsoft, most notably a film crew and an NGO, appropriated the image of Brazil's redeemable drug trafficker, confidently reproducing

the motif in order to promote a narrative of digital inclusion that was seemingly many degrees more transformative. Microsoft's team selected images that corresponded with a neoliberal narrative of disruption and ignored facts that revealed social reproduction and resistance in the face of outside intervention. Wanderson and his community were indeed transformed, but not through disruptive inclusion as Microsoft suggests. Rather, Wanderson's transformation was accompanied by a de facto exile from the Complexo, and the Complexo's transformation was accompanied by concerns over the renewal of violence after pacification.

Conclusion

Considering the discursive similarities between pacification and digital inclusion, Microsoft's narrative of Wanderson's digital inclusion "hides" certain aspects of the *favela*'s politics. Specifically, actors associated with the multinational technology corporation Microsoft appropriated a transformative discourse created by the community policing policy, pacification. By appropriating a discourse of outside intervention, proponents of digital inclusion disguised many of the arrangements that allowed Wanderson to transition from a parallel state drug dealer to a productive actor under Brazil's formal state. By hiding the role of pacification policy in their marketing campaign, Microsoft avoided possibilities of critique: pacification is violent while digital disruption is a passive form of development. Favela residents increasingly interpreted martial force as abuse while technological inclusion encourages plurality and transparency. The carceral punishment experienced by former drug dealers causes widespread social trauma while economic reform prompted by digital inclusion brings hope and the promise of prosperity. Still, as demonstrated above, pacification and digital inclusion are each informed by various inspirations, motivations, and meanings. Microsoft's corporate image, for example, depends on the idea of digital disruption and, when applied to Brazil, strives to

promote participation in a formal economy. Wanderson is realizing a dream of inclusion and, in the process, coming to understand his own self-worth. In promoting Wanderson's journey as it does, Microsoft disguises the contradictory results of formal citizenship in a pacified *favela*: disruption through reproduction, peace from violence, and critique without representation.

Chapter Three
Digital Utopia: Class, NGOs, and "Converting the Fine" in Rio de Janeiro's *Favelas*

In previous chapters, I discussed the hidden politics of digital reproduction in Rio de Janeiro's *favelas*. Rather than being disruptive, I argue that a corporate narrative of digital inclusion disguises more violent politics and policies such as the *favela* pacification program. In this chapter, I look at a middleclass non-governmental organization or NGO (*organização não governmental* or *ONG* in Portuguese) that translates an idea of digital inclusion between corporations, the Brazilian State, and *favela*-based clients. I volunteered and carried out two years of ethnographic observation at Brazil's largest digital inclusion NGO, CDI (the Committee for Digital Inclusion). During this time, I recorded the institutional roles and personal opinions of CDI's middleclass workers. Going beyond the idea of social and institutional inclusion, CDI and its workers promoted a form of digital utopia that encouraged the adoption of middleclass values of production and consumption in the *favela*.

This chapter examines the utopian potentials that inspire and are inspired by digital inclusion. I ask what digital inclusion projects in Rio's *favelas* reveal about class in a modern network society and how these projects advance the goals of corporations and the State in marginalized communities. I detail the experiences and beliefs of middleclass and elite Brazilians who, much like the working-class individuals they serve, have been personally transformed by digital technology. They believe that digital technology facilitates entrepreneurial practices and leads to a more perfect world. I conclude this chapter by discussing a process called "converting a fine," which allows middleclass NGOs to transform corporate funds into *favela*-based projects. By examining the ideological journey from the

notion of utopia to converting a fine, I provide an example of how middleclass-ness is essential to the hidden politics of digital reproduction in Rio de Janeiro's *favelas*.

A Utopian Startup

Early in my research, I witnessed a dozen men hug one another on the stage of a Catholic school gym at the base of a towering *favela* near Rio de Janeiro's seaport. Many of the men on stage were notable figures in Brazil's information society. Rio's minister of science and technology stood next to a former IBM executive; both men were approaching 60 years of age and dabbed tears from the corner of their eyes. Two camera-ready celebrities in their early thirties, one a former *telenovela* actor and the other a frequent tech commentator on cable television, smiled glassy-eyed as they looked at the audience beyond the stage. The gymnasium was filled with hundreds of onlookers, each expressing some combination of disbelief, surprise, and joy.

What triggered these emotions? A 16-year-old named Claude, stood at center stage. He was a resident of Rio's first *favela*, Providência, and had just been awarded second place at the event *Startup Weekend Favela* (SWF). Claude awkwardly slung his trophy, a late-model Xbox 360, under an arm while he wiped tears from his face with the back of another. Claude blubbered into a microphone, "I've never come close to winning anything in my life. I've never been told that I was important like this"(Author's Field Notes March 2014).

The room had a warm, collective effervescence, as the moment demonstrated an ideal of digital inclusion that felt "transfigured and imagined in the physical form" (Durkheim 2008 [1912], 236). SWF participants had just finished a weekend of activities that included brainstorming, designing, and pitching a *favela*-oriented mobile application. Cardboard cutouts

of Steve Jobs, Bill Gates, and Mark Zuckerberg adorned the vaulting gymnasium as a not-so-subtle reference to SWF's goal of stimulating entrepreneurship in Rio's pacified *favelas*.

Alongside dozens of other groups, Claude and his friends proposed an online platform that allowed *favela* residents to create video games about their community. Much like popular depictions of the *favela* found in print, on television, and over the Internet, representations of the *favela* found in video games reproduced an alienated form of crime talk that dehumanized the effects of everyday violence in the community. For example, one level of the billion-dollar videogame *Call of Duty* (2007) requires players to chase after drug dealers in a digital *favela* in Rio de Janeiro. The *favela* remains nameless and, as is evident for those familiar with Rio de Janeiro's *carta postal* (literally, "post card" or "skyline"), could not exist in real life. Gameplay is designed around a chaotic barrage of digital bullets, Spanish-language profanity rather than Brazilian Portuguese, and lifeless wattle and daub hovels. Claude's platform hoped to rewrite these problematic representations of violence from the digital *favela* and create something more fantastic and otherworldly. When voting for Claude's proposal, SWF's judges were inspired by the possibility of bringing a disruptive nuance and child-like imagination to digital representations of the *favela*. For many in the gymnasium, Claude symbolized the promise that digital technology could include Brazil's most excluded communities and represent them more fairly.

I spent two years carrying out ethnographic and institutional research with SWF's principal organizer, CDI. CDI was Brazil's—if not the world's—premiere digital inclusion NGO, receiving funding from corporations such as Microsoft, and operating hundreds of social projects across three continents. Central to CDI's prolonged success was the promotion of

digital technology's disruptive potentials—the right to be heard and participate, the right to information, protection against the cooption of such rights, and the recognition of more fluid local worldviews. Each of these potentials aligned well with corporate ideals and promoted a growing connection between the *favela* and the global network society.

I found that CDI and SWF exemplified how NGOs introduce ideas of digital disruption to Brazilian *favelas*. Anthropologists have shown that NGOs play an important role in introducing global market philosophies to marginalized communities (Kamat 2004). The institutional logics of NGOs like CDI represent a shift from early versions of development that were state-centric and that framed marginalized communities as pre-modern "others" (Ginsburg 2008), living in a "culture of poverty" (Lewis 1959) and unable to grasp the democratizing forces of technology. Opposing these more authoritative concepts of progress, NGOs like CDI embrace a "post-development" logic that promotes the independent potentials of marginalized communities to articulate alternatives to the State (Escobar 1995). CDI's post-development logic is a product of neoliberal conditions that discourage the role of the State in social welfare projects and encourage civil society to take responsibility for development in marginalized communities. According to Brodwyn Fisher, NGOs act as state builders in communities neglected by government institutions and undertake

> an enormously varied range of activities, including implementing grass roots or sustainable development, promoting human rights and social justice, protesting environmental degradation, and pursuing many other objectives formerly ignored or left to governmental agencies (Fisher 1997, 440).

NGOs and their employees view themselves as removed from the problematic structural arrangements of government and corporate institutions (Fisher 1997, 442). Similarly, CDI occupies the Brazilian third sector (*o teceiro setor*) that is distinct from both their patrons (State

and corporate institutions) and clients (*favela* residents). Third sector NGOs offer alternative types of knowledge and authority while negotiating complex and constantly evolving relationships with dominant State actors.

As intermediary organizations that bring together individuals from various institutions and class backgrounds, NGOs often produce a contradictory set of associations (Fisher 1997). For example, most of CDI's employees and many of SWF's participants described themselves, when I asked them, as middleclass, but found themselves trying to improve the lives of the poor. Despite their dedication to *favela*-based causes, many of SWF's participants were visiting a *favela* for the first time. SWF gave them an opportunity to gain street-level knowledge that could apply to future digital inclusion work. A smaller yet noteworthy group of *favela* residents in attendance were part of Brazil's *nova clase meia* (NCM, or new middle class), an economically- and socially-ascendant group that emerged principally in *favelas* at the start of the millennium. Many of the NCM with whom I spoke felt neither part of the traditional middleclass nor representative of the *favela* working class. Another group was made up of teenagers and young adults from Providência invited to the SWF by local community organizations. Each of these groups created their own unique sense of what digital inclusion meant.

Despite these diverse viewpoints, consumerism provided one of the central unifying forces between these groups and helped to disguise the event's classed contradictions. Everyone but locals paid a participation fee of R$220, or about a third of Brazil's monthly minimum wage, to attend SWF. Those coming from beyond Rio treated the event as a form of "voluntourism"—they participated in SWF, went to the beach, and made photo excursions to

nearby landmarks. Many of SWF's participants had the newest iPhones and Apple tablets, items that cost as much as seven times Brazil's monthly minimum wage and that remained relatively inaccessible to the average Brazilian. Rather than consumer technology acting as a marker of class distinction (Bourdieu 1979), SWF participants celebrated as laying the groundwork for a collective experience that transcended the *favela*'s historic forms of socio-economic segregation. Digital technology leveled the socio-economic playing field, brought individuals from diverse backgrounds together, and gave previously marginalized individuals a new sense of belonging.

The mediation of these various classed positions into a unified sense of consumer belonging helped to produce a script of technological disruption that simplified the relationship between people and technologies (Latour 1991; Ritzer 2004). CDI embraces an historical narrative that ties technology to plural democracy and individual autonomy (Fleck 1935; Merton 1938; Cohen & Arato, 1994; Weber 1996; Fischer 2007; Kumar; 1998; Malaby 2012). It also embraces a corporate marketing rhetoric that presents smart phones and personal computers as a form of empowerment, not just in terms of material equality but also in terms of education, politics, and culture (Verhoeff 2012). Throughout my research, CDI was one of the most present promoters of this individualizing discourse, teaming up with international corporations such as Microsoft as well as *favela*-based NGOs in order to spread this ideology.

CDI's and SWF's celebration of a digitally included world also illuminates what Jeffery Juris describes as "information utopics": an expression of political imaginaries achieved through "horizontal collaboration, open access, and direct democracy" (Juris 2005, 22). Believing in the possibility of a utopia, particularly one that seeks to eliminate socio-economic inequality,

requires a long-term intellectual and moral optimism (Wright 2012).[12] Through information utopics, digital inclusion projects imagine a not-too-distant future, and a possible present, where digital technology helps communities and individuals overcome historical forms of socio-economic exclusion. CDI, for example, did not promise to create a new, digitally included utopia. Rather, they promoted the possibility of a more ideal world, the actions that people take to realize this world, and the new forms of community that emerge as a result.

CDI's pursuit of digital utopia follows what Zygmunt Bauman (2005) describes as an unfulfilled hunt for an ideal world and an active quest to repair the failed promises of social progress. For Bauman, early utopists were gardeners, planting, and planning for an expected outcome (i.e., a world without class, race, or material anomie). Early utopias were inspired by a "hopelessness" regarding the past and present, and a belief that a regular, predictable, and secure world based on the status quo was unsustainable (Bauman 2005, 163). Early utopian communities, like those imagined in the Soviet Union, appeared improbable, overly idealistic, and "ugly caricatures of dreams rather than the things dreamt of" (Bauman 2015, 164; Bauman 2009). Considering contemporary forms of neoliberalism and globalization, Bauman claims that contemporary utopists are more like hunters than gardeners, for whom the kill is anti-climactic when compared to the hunt itself—they are anti-utopian in this sense. Neoliberal hunter "anti-utopias" are deregulated, privatized, and individualized. The anti-utopia is more "liquid," "a

[12] Popular thinking described Brazil's New World democracy as modernist and rational. In 1940, Stefan Zweig's "Brasil, um país do futuro"(Brazil, a country of the future) imagined the nation using its vast natural resources to overcome the violence, prejudices, and political negotiations that led Europe to World War II and the Holocaust. Zweig provides one of the more notably optimistic examples of Brazilian futurism in literature (Carvalho 2006). Other Brazilian science fiction literature examines racial democracy, critique authoritarian rule, and urbanization (Ginway 2004.) Ginway, M. E. (2004). *Brazilian science fiction: cultural myths and nationhood in the land of the future*. Bucknell University Press

utopia of no end," ever-adapting to a neoliberal world without finite goals (Bauman 2015 164). Anti-utopias are motivated by the belief that, at present, there is a chance to partially address what is preventing a more ideal world without seeking complete social and political revolution.

Reflecting Bauman's discussion of gardener utopias, early *digital* utopias contemplated by techno-anarchists and anti-corporate activists posited a virtual world that could replace an unequal real world. Current ideas of digital disruption have abandoned these more revolutionary information utopias for more practical and achievable goals. Digital-inclusion NGOs that embrace the logic of a hunter anti-utopia seek to ameliorate present inequalities found within a network society rather than to upturn society completely. A liquid utopia, like the one realized by Claude at SWF, demonstrates how elite corporations and middleclass NGOs reproduce their own classed privileges through the discourse of digital disruption and "doing good." CDI, for example organized community-oriented projects that targeted the most marginalized individuals (such as prisoners, drug traffickers, and indigenous tribes) in hopes of making incremental and sometimes only symbolic progress. CDI's events did not hope to bring about the *favela*'s future digital utopia, but rather to embrace inclusion as an ethical pursuit driven by technology.

My ethnographic experience at CDI allowed me to see how an ethical pursuit of utopia was imperfectly filtered through the understandings of middle-class NGOs. Digital inclusion disguises the unequal flow of capital created by technology (de Barros 2013, 133: Ribeiro 2013; Goldin and Dowdall 2015) and allows corporations, the government, and elite institutions to internalize and avoid criticism for their part in creating unequal socio-economic conditions (Kirsch 2006). Digital utopia is not the product of "pure gifts" given by institutionally and

financially powerful sponsors without the assumption of reciprocity but, rather, a larger ideological and classed process that seeks to instill a middleclass sense of morality and ethics in the *favela* (Malinowski 2002; Mauss 1966; Laidlaw 2000; Parry 1986). The idea of a more perfect world depends on a classed understanding of morality, expectations one has of society, and professional practices. In this sense, I see clear economic and political incentives for elite institutions to support middleclass digital inclusion projects in *favelas*.

An NGO

I spent two years as a part time volunteer at CDI translating the NGO's internal documents from Portuguese to English and attending meetings. I sat at a spare desk, crammed into a second-floor office with six other employees in what appeared to have once been a Victorian-era bedroom antechamber. Rodrigo Baggio, CDI's founder, came into the office for about an hour each day. He greeted all of the employees by name and asked how their day's work was progressing. He then retreated to his private office, a modernist glass booth where the home's master bedroom once was, to receive visitors and make phone calls. While I rarely worked directly with Baggio, I found myself an indirect spectator to his management of CDI and his everyday quest for a digital utopia.

My time at CDI overlapped with a period in which Baggio was preparing a TED talk about what he called "e-topia." At the time of my research, the TED series was seen as the Internet's premiere venue for entrepreneurs and creative thinkers to present their ideas concerning innovation. Many TED talks had gone "viral" on the Internet, receiving millions of online views and making minor celebrities out of several philanthropists. TED talks are highly scripted events and can be motived as much by a desire to inspire as to market one's personal brand. Baggio wanted to give the talk in English, and on several occasions asked for my help with

pronunciation and clarity. The talk was based on his personal experiences with digital technology, his philosophies about education and marginality, and his beliefs that digital inclusion NGOs can affect change in Brazil's poorest communities. Rather than as a means to producing a distant and overly optimistic future, Baggio believed that e-topia could be understood in everyday terms and through real-world examples.

The narrative of Baggio's TED talk was based on many of the same stories that he told at events like SWF. Baggio often described technology with grandeur and promise. He included these stories in the grant applications that CDI wrote to major corporations, and frequently repeated the story when introducing himself to *favela*-based NGOs. In this sense, Baggio understood his personal digital inspiration as essential to CDI's story. In the 1980s, Baggio's father, a successful electronics vendor, gave him a Brazilian-made clone of the groundbreaking Apple II personal computer called the TK-82. While practicing for the TED talk, Baggio told me, "No one had computers back then. I was dyslexic and never liked school. But technology I understood." Baggio became enamored by personal computers and embraced their ability to empower disadvantaged, disabled, and excluded individuals. His technical inspiration paralleled his social enlightenment.

> I played football with street kids. They always fought and thought I was older because I was tall. I went to school and they didn't, and they came to me to resolve their problems. Unfortunately, they solved many of their problems with a switchblade [*canivete*] and one time I got stabbed while trying to break up a fight. I went to the ground and they stopped fighting to take care of me. I told them, "I don't feel pain, just love" ["*Eu não sinto dor, só amor"*]. (Author's Field Notes October 2014)

The experience was at once traumatic and inspirational for Baggio. Years later, he had a nightmare of the stabbing and woke with the idea for CDI. Soon after, he left his electronics business in order to bring socially informed technology projects to underserved communities.

Baggio positioned himself at the vanguard of digital inclusion in Brazil. According to Baggio, CDI started in 1995, "before there was Internet in Brazil." Because the commercial Internet only became widely available there in 1995, ten years after the United States, Baggio saw Brazil as plagued by a "digital divide": a poverty of digital technology linked to broader forms of social exclusion. Activists like Baggio assumed that if a community was socially marginalized before the rise of a network society, the same community would be marginalized within a contemporary network society. Similarly, he believed that historical inequalities such as poverty could be mitigated if communities were no longer marginalized within a network society.

CDI's first project was a computer lab in the *favela* of Santa Marta—coincidently the first *favela* to be pacified by the police.[13] Soon afterwards, Baggio received a letter from an inmate at Rio's soon-to-be-demolished Frei Caneca penitentiary. The inmate had read about the computer lab and asked Baggio to introduce a digital inclusion program at the prison. According to Baggio, "Frei Caneca was the most successful prison in Brazil because everyone was required to have a job." In describing the prison in this way, Baggio reaffirmed the inclusionary message of CDI and suggested that digital technology facilitates access to the formal economy. Baggio also highlighted the fact that CDI's model was reproducible. By the early 2000s, CDI had

[13] Coincidently, Santa Marta was also the first *favela* to be pacified in 2008. This makes Santa Marta a testing ground for both digital inclusion in Brazil as well as community-based policing.

projects in hundreds of community centers throughout the world. It provided Internet access to millions of marginalized individuals and did so while promoting a discourse of socio-economic liberation. Dozens of international awards and profiles in the media described CDI as one of the world's foremost digital inclusion NGOs.[14]

In terms of political, social, and economic relationships, NGOs like Baggio's CDI are a relatively new form of civil institution in Brazil. During the colonial period, chattel slavery excluded the majority of Brazil's population from participating in the open market and in civil society.[15] Private landowners with large estates dominated public politics, the private market, and, at times, everyday domestic life (Freyre 1959; Avritzer 2012). After the founding of Brazil's first republic in 1889, the country's regional capitals witnessed a brief fluorescence of labor unions and charity organizations oriented towards helping the poor, sick, and elderly. Over the same period, *favelas* became a growing feature of Brazil's urban landscape. The Catholic Church emerged as one of the few elite organizations, governmental or otherwise, that maintained a permanent presence in the *favela*. Church-run foundations encouraged *favela* residents to be productive, moral, and, law-abiding citizens through work programs, goals that aligned well with the hygiene-oriented urban removal programs that were reshaping Rio at the same time (Valla 1986). From the 1930s to the 1980s, a series of dictatorships then openly suppressed Brazil's civil society and attempted to incorporate only moderately dissenting voices into

[14] Baggio was even invited to meet with U.S. president George W. Bush but earned activist credibility by refusing the invitation because of the violence U.S. security forces caused in a São Paulo *favela* where CDI operated.

[15] Civil liberties were limited during the colonial period: for example, private ownership of a printing press was restricted to royal mandate. Religious and political censorship were encoded in law (Hallewell 2005).[15] Brazil's empire (1822-1889) founded universities and sponsored the arts but these actions almost exclusively benefited the families slave-holding plutocrats and a small but growing community of cosmopolitan bourgeoisie.

officially recognized political parties and class organizations. In this sense, Brazil's earliest NGOs emerged as left-leaning anti-dictatorship and anti-statist institutions. Many of theses ethnos could be observed in Baggio's visions for Brazil's future.

Brazil's re-democratization in the 1980s followed the model of other "new left" movements that emerged during the post-Cold War era (Habermas 1989). Brazil's middle-class liberals "professionalized institutions where militancy [became] a full-time job rather than a part-time activity" (Gonzalez 2010, 134). During re-democratization, NGOs became a central feature of Brazilian politics, and CDI emerged as the vanguard of Brazil's digital inclusion movement. Following the practice of NGOs from the global north who reflected imperial qualities due to their cooperation with multinational development projects in formal colonies, many of Brazil's NGOs operated as agents of internal development (Petras 1999). Rather than opposing the newly democratic state, many civil society actors sought to be integrated into government and corporate institutions (Reis 1995). Along with other digital inclusion NGOs in Brazil, CDI re-politicized an often politically-neutral discourse about technology by supporting a network of "insurgent experts" that used technology to challenge the practices of elite educational, technical, and political institutions (Shaw 2008; Shaw 2011). Most of the digital inclusion NGOs that I observed had collaborated with the government on projects at one time or another, and often depended on the government for financial support. This produced three general categories of NGO-related groups that participated in *favela*-based digital inclusion programs: government and corporate sponsors of NGOs; professional, middleclass, and multinational NGOs that helped to implement institutional funds; and local NGOs that provided institutional access to local communities. Each of these categories were interconnected and

dependent on one another and were in some way tied to the state.

Baggio was able to articulate an inclusionary, neoliberal, and utopic philosophy that avoided a critique of Brazil's contemporary party politics and exclusionary institutional arrangements. Specifically, like many others, Baggio found philosophical inspiration in the well-known and highly influential teachings of Brazilian educator Paulo Freire. As explained in earlier chapters, Freire was a Brazilian educator who spent much of his life teaching Brazilian peasants how to read.[16] He authored several books about fostering a critically informed type of literacy. Freire is taught in public school, and Brazil's political and intellectual left hold him as a champion for the oppressed. Baggio, like Freire, believed that a critical pedagogy was most effectively realized on the social margins, and that technology could play an essential role in this effort, though where Freire helped impoverished sugarcane cutters, Baggio focused on *favela* residents. Freire also believed that technologies such as the radio and slide projectors could be politicized as a means to support a radical humanism that would democratize a material world (Freire 1973, 35). Considering more modern technologies, Baggio sought to foster social empowerment through the use of digital technology. Both Freire and Baggio believed in that utopia was possible and suggested that education could bring it to fruition. By engaging with Freire's ideas, Baggio and CDI aligned themselves with a champion of the oppressed that was particularly well-known in Brazil and in the *favela*. These philosophical

[16] By the time he died in 1997, he wrote dozens of works and was responsible for teaching millions around the world how to read. Friere's continued relevance is summed by Donaldo Macedo , "Whereas students in the Third World and other nations struggling with totalitarian regimes would risk their freedom, if not their lives, to read Paulo Freire, in our so-called open societies his work suffers from a more sophisticated form of censorship: omission"(Macedo 2005:16)

intersections allowed Baggio to build his personal brand around a set of popular notions about pedagogy and utopic inclusion.

On a more practical level, Baggio made Freire's student-centered learning an institutional cornerstone of CDI. Following a Freireian model, CDI's programs first ask participants to "read" by developing technological literacy—using basic word processing programs on a personal computer and searching for information on the Internet. CDI's programs then tell participants to "read the world" by using newfound technical literacies to examine oppressive forms of authority in one's own community. Participants are then instructed to form a plan for action that directly addresses oppressive authority. After executing the plan, participants are asked to evaluate their actions and consider how they can be reproduced in the future.

As an ethnographic observer and a student of critical pedagogy, I could not help but recognize important philosophical and practical disconnects between Freire and Baggio. These differences stem most notably from the fact that Freire died in 1997 and had made little commentary on the critical potentials of the Internet. Digital inclusion activists like Baggio were left to interpret critical pedagogies in an information age without the critical imagination of Freire himself to guide them. Freire and Baggio also differed in their vision for utopia and their thoughts on the ethical nature of the state and globalization. As a liberation theologian, Freire opposed "realist" interpretations of utopia—such as the idea of a neoliberal utopia with free-flowing markets and pluralistic consumerism—and instead promoted a more biblical sense of utopia that called for the just and egalitarian liberation of the oppressed (Bastone 1997: 181). Utopic images of a coming messiah were replaced with the possibility of a better world without

oppression, exploitation, and inequality (Torres 2014). Freire held a dialectical view of technology in line with Marx and Gramsci, where technology can be an instrument of oppression as well as an instrument of liberation and community (Freire 1972, 157; Freire 1997, 35; Freire 1998a, 38, 92; Gadotti 1994, 78; Kahn & Kellner 2007, 435). Freire also believed that multinational corporations were responsible for Brazil's military dictatorship (1979). As a result of Freire's critique, Brazil's dictatorship, and dictatorships around the world, were openly antagonistic towards his beliefs and instead encouraged corporate pedagogies that promoted consumerism and technocratic modes of production.

In contrast to Freire's opposition to the State and corporations, Baggio embraced a socio-political environment where corporations and the government were natural partners of NGOs, and a corporate narrative of disruption in which technology was a tool with inherently democratic effects. Working in post-dictatorship Brazil, CDI actively partnered with corporations, the government, and multinational institutions that sought a more perfect world through individual entrepreneurship. The State also embraced Baggio's activities as groundwork for a healthy civil society. In this sense, Baggio exemplified Bauman's understanding of modern utopists by discussing digital inclusion as a moral pursuit without a definitive end—a logical stance that opposed the more definitive and revolutionary ambitions of Freire's critical pedagogy.

Financially and politically, CDI was well served by Baggio's imperfect interpretation of Freire's critical pedagogy. The combination of critical pedagogy, digital technology, and corporate discourse opened up numerous possibilities for CDI to finance its mission. When I asked about this arrangement, Baggio told me that, in an age of expensive computer

equipment and little direct government support, CDI's partnership with corporations and international NGOs was a practical necessity. The deceptively neutral political discourse surrounding digital technology also allowed many of CDI's employees to avoid critique from activists, politicians, and corporations. Like Baggio, CDI's employees suggested that in order to achieve a more perfect world and a digitally included *favela,* there needed to be a morally informed compromise with dominant institutions.

The Middle Class

CDI's day-to-day was not unlike the everyday of private businesses and government agencies in Brazil that hired university-educated, white-collar workers. On most days, I had casual conversations with CDI's employees over lunch while smoking cigarettes, or while having a beer after work. I often discussed my experience living in the Complexo do Alemão and how it produced a number of awkward tensions relating to my privileged subject positions: American, white, and university educated. In return, my middleclass co-workers often appeared amazed that I would choose to live in a *favela*, particularly one as notorious as the Complexo. While they related to my interest in digital inclusion in the *favela*, they assumed that I would want to live in a high-rise apartment or be closer to the beach. The Complexo in particular was a notoriously dangerous *favela* that few outsiders visited. By living in there, I became one of the few individuals at CDI who actually had daily contact with the impoverished and marginalized population they served.

Central to CDI's working environment was the embrace of a middleclass and cosmopolitan aesthetic, and the use of an English business vocabulary. Words such as "marketing," "work-shopping," and "pitch" were often awkwardly inserted into Portuguese sentences. Baggio described CDI as a "startup," a concept made popular in Silicon Valley to

denote a small, scalable, and innovative enterprise run by a charismatic and visionary social entrepreneur. CDI, like many development projects since the 1980s, promoted a concept of "social entrepreneurship" (*empreendadorismo social*) as socially conscious, self-made, and autonomous socio-economic activity (Roy 2010, Jefferson 2015). While describing their work, many of CDI's employees described themselves as entrepreneurs rather than employees as a means to distance themselves from the rigid structures of the business world. This view demonstrated the influence of a contemporary neoliberal discourse on CDI's internal politics and revealed the type of world they sought to encourage through promoting digital inclusion in the *favela*.

CDI's employees were equally self-aware of issues relating to identity. For example, I shared a cup of coffee one morning with one of CDI's grant writers named Theo. He was white and grew up in one of Rio's wealthiest neighborhoods. He reassured me, "I work with people from the *favela* and dedicate my life to improving their lives. The people I know in the *favela* accept me and appreciate me for what I do. I don't need to justify my actions to anyone else if those from the *favela* accept me."(Author's Field Notes December 2014) I asked Theo if his position as a grant writer allowed him to physically work in the *favela* and make connections with members of the community. He explained that SWF was the first time that he had entered a *favela* and added, "I have a family, I can't go to the *favela*. It's not safe for me and I am not going to take them in there with me." Theo finished his explanation with a qualification of his social relationships outside of the *favelas*. "I go to the beach a lot and some of my friends live in *favelas*." Despite his position as a professional agent of change in *favelas*, Theo justified his social distance as natural and even necessary. He, like many employees at CDI, negotiated a

space-based relationship to crime that let them continue to live comfortably in their middleclass social spaces.

I viewed Theo's response as an example of how disruptive and utopic ideals of digital inclusion are often filtered through middleclass worldviews. Digital inclusion projects, in their quest to realize a late-modern utopia and expand access to democratic rights in the *favela*, gave a heightened sense of social responsibility to middleclass NGO employees. Following a pattern seen in NGOs the world over, CDI's employees described their work as self-justifying and often reproduced the utopic opinion that digital inclusion is inherently disruptive (de Waal 1997; Minn 2016). However, this moral superiority contradicted more durable markers of middleclass-ness reproduced within CDI, such as socio-economic segregation and competition for salaried employment. CDI's employees, again like NGO workers across the world, often described themselves as "volunteers," but also used their position to maintain a salaried middleclass lifestyle (Wanatabe 2015, 469). As white-collar professionals, CDI's employees often discussed salaries, economic mobility, and other markers of class such as luxury consumer goods and foreign travel.

CDI employed a highly educated and specialized staff that included accountants, computer technicians, educators, executives, maids, and cooks. Administratively, CDI was led by an executive *diretor* (director), Baggio, who managed an institutional vision and oversaw administrative functions. For his effort in promoting digital utopia, Baggio received the NGO's highest salary. Managers who helped develop CDI's pedagogical and technical vision received less than Baggio, but more than the average employee. Employees that managed CDI's day-to-day activities, doing mundane paperwork and communicating with clients, were also given

compensation in line with middleclass marketing specialists in the private sector with a university degree.

On several occasions, NGO workers explained to me that they prioritized cultural and social capital over economic capital. At the same time, they also offered me unsolicited advice on how to advance within the organization and maintain my economic rights as an employee. For example, I spent the majority of my time at CDI translating documents from Portuguese into English for international sponsors. A 20-year-old woman and recent university graduate named Ingrid carried out many of the same tasks that I carried out. She told me, "You need to get paid. Everyone here is paid." At this point in the conversation, I realized that I had been the only person working at CDI who did not receive a salary. I explained to Ingrid that I felt receiving a salary could compromise the ethical standing of my ethnographic research and that I received funding from the United States Department of Education, to which she reiterated that "Everyone at CDI is paid. The other employees probably think you are paid already. You should just ask for something." Ingrid, much like her colleagues, believed that a modest middleclass salary was justified for her work helping the poor. She inferred that middleclass salaries legitimized CDI's quest for a digital utopia in marginalized *favelas*.

Some employees had been with CDI for twenty years and, in addition to earning respectable middleclass salaries, traveled internationally for work and could easily transition into higher paying positions in the private sector or the government. Most of CDI's employees, however, reflected free market, non-union labor dynamics and had worked at the NGO for less than three years. Over the course of my research, at least seven of CDI's sixteen employees left

for better paying jobs. When employees left CDI, their reasons were always for better pay and career advancement, rather than due to a lack of faith in the NGO's utopian vision.

As I was responsible for translating internal documents relating to grant writing, I was frequently given access to CDI's financial documents relating to salary. While I found no evidence of scandal, corruption, or misappropriation, I did learn that professionalization benefited the salaries of CDI's employees. Salaries at middleclass non-*favela* NGOs such as CDI were universally higher, and the workforce more competitive and bureaucratized, than their *favela*-based counterparts. Rather than directly laundering money, NGOs like CDI often paid employees market value for their work and used a significant portion of grant money to pay the salaries of middleclass employees. In this respect, CDI demonstrates how a significant amount of economic resources must be dedicated to maintaining the institutional integrity of a professional NGO. However, the disruptive potentials that CDI promised for the *favela* were not extended to opportunities or compensation for *favela* residents within the NGO. CDI employees that lived in the *favela* were normally paid less than their coworkers because they lacked professional qualifications like education and foreign language skills. This pay gap was problematic given the fact that *favela* residents were often CDI's principle spokespeople, educators, and fieldworkers. I found CDI's class dynamic to be most pronounced during the daily lunch provided to employees. The employee who made our lunch, Lucia, carried out tasks similar to the *empregada* (maid) found in many elite households. Lucia did not eat with the rest of the crew and rarely engaged them in conversation. She lived in a *favela* on the outskirts of Rio, was the first to arrive at CDI in the morning, often the last to leave at night, and spent three hours round trip commuting each day on public transportation. In contrast, most of her

co-workers lived in Rio's “noble” Zona Sul near CDI's headquarters, and often complained when they had to move their cars during lunch to avoid parking tickets.

Many of CDI's workers struggled with the contradictions of a morally informed yet economically self-serving middleclass lifestyle. Much like a Weberian work ethic (1996), CDI’s employees and participants at its events engaged in a “spirit of development” that combined concepts of moral and material prosperity (Bornstein 2005). This mixture of neoliberal and utopian ethics allowed professionalized NGO workers like those found at CDI to maintain the markers of middleclass status (i.e., salaried employment, high levels education, and cosmopolitan cultural practices) while laying claim to a form of moral authority while facilitating the construction of a purported digital utopia.

I found it problematic that employees who maintained the most distance both professionally and socially from the *favela* received the largest salaries. While they traveled throughout Brazil and the world, many employees at CDI told me that their job did not allow them to do work in the *favela* and they could not imagine a personal or professional reason to go to a *favela*. Similarly, fieldwork in the *favelas* was carried out by only two of CDI’s educators, both of whom were the only employees who could claim to be *favela* residents. Combined with this occupational distance, the increasingly online nature of office work was making CDI's need to be physically present in a community obsolete. This represented an evolution of CDI’s model and reflected a digitization of NGO work in a network society. A model that de-prioritized employee presence within local NGOs also had the potential to create further physical distance between middleclass NGO workers and their *favela*-based clients.

It was unclear to me if CDI's employees would have been comfortable working in the *favela* on a daily basis. Most of CDI were university-educated marketers, accountants, and pedagogists who did most of their work in the office environment. Unlike the *favela*-based NGOs, educators, and activists that they worked with, the main development team at CDI had little need for fieldwork. I frequently invited my coworkers to the Complexo to meet local activists, find partners at local NGOs, and meet other like-minded people in the community. While many of my co-workers declined the invitation for logistical and scheduling reasons, such as a busy schedule or difficulty traveling around the city, some of my co-workers resorted to crime talk concerning the Complexo's violent history. They expressed feeling "unsafe" in the *favela*. For example, one of CDI's office managers lived in the lower-middleclass neighborhood adjacent to the Complexo do Alemão. I asked if he wanted to meet me in or near the Complexo for a cup of coffee or beer. He declined and explained to me, "I don't have anything to do there. I see violence on the news. You know. It's scary." I reminded him that, statistically, the rate of violent crime on the streets that bordered the Complexo was higher than inside the community. He countered, "There are no drug dealers on my street. There are on yours." Embracing a rather banal crime talk, the office manager suggested that the *favela* itself and its drug gangs were the cause of insecurity in the neighborhood.

This conversation was one of many that I had with middleclass employees at CDI, where crime grounded their immediate opinions of the Complexo instead of the NGO's frequent narrative of digital utopia. This dynamic exposed a disconnect between CDI's more inclusionary branding and the realities of negotiating classed spaces in a violent city. While this contradiction is subtle and does not reproduce structural violence as much as, for example,

Rio's governor calling the *favela* a "*fábrica de marginal*" (criminal factory) (A Folha de São Paulo 2007) as a justification for violent policing tactics, it helps to justify the personal maintenance of a middleclass space. This social distance runs counter to the ideological goals of CDI and reflects a hidden politics of middleclass-ness that exists beneath their narrative of digital inclusion. As an ethnographer who chose to live in the favela from a place of privilege, this physical distance between the ideological progressive middle class and their favela-based clients was uniquely clear to me. Furthermore, as I was an acquaintance with both, I was able to see that middleclass development workers who chose to avoid favelas maintained this distance rather than residents who sought increased visibility for their community.

The New Middle Class

One of the most noteworthy arrivals to the Complexo's consumer market during my research came in 2014 when the national electronics store chain Casas Bahia opened a branch at the entrance of the community. The metal-framed, concrete, chain-store building contrasted with the hodgepodge of brick masonry used to construct the surrounding *favela* homes. At the grand opening, crowds spilled onto the narrow *favela* street carrying bright plastic bags filled with electronics and door prizes. Casas Bahia celebrated the Complexo as well as their new store. Locally recorded Baile funk blared from a tall set of concert speakers. There were performances by a local rock band, a hip-hop group, and a dance troop associated with digital inclusion NGOs in the Complexo. Many activists in the Complexo heralded the event as a symbol of inclusion. The opening of Casas Bahia in the Complexo was also an indication of what Brazilian economists had begun to call the *"Nova Clase Meia"* (New Middle Class, or NCM), consisting of millions of Brazilians pulled out of poverty by a combination by rising wages and government policies that encouraged a neoliberal form of consumption.

I spoke with one neatly-dressed corporate representative from Casas Bahia who appeared to be what many in the *favela* would call a "playboy." His light complexion and blonde hair contrasted with the principally afro-Brazilian crowd that formed in front of the store. He grinned in silence and seemed to shake his head in disbelief at the combination of his company's brand and the working class *favela* aesthetic of funk music and informal housing developments. I asked him what he thought about the security situation in the community and whether or not it affected their considerations for building the store. He responded, "We don't care about police. There are no pacified *favelas* in São Paulo and we have several stores in *favelas* in São Paulo. They have their problems still, but police aren't important for us. What really changed was access to credit cards." Rather than engaging in crime talk, as my question may have prompted him to do, Casas Bahia's representative considered instead issues relating to the market and specifically mentioned residents' status as consumers.

In reaction, I told the representative about my experiences at the Casas Bahia in São Paulo. A month before our conversation, I had visited one of these Casas Bahia locations in the sprawling *favela* complex of Paraisapolis while visiting an NGO affiliated with CDI. Moments after stepping out of the Casas Bahia, I was surrounded by a police patrol. They searched me and accused me of being a drug dealer. After telling my story to the representative, he qualified his statement about security. He explained that in Brazil, security was often a principle concern but could be mitigated by hiring guards who lived in the community. He explained that the bigger threat to the new location's profitability was not security but rather a lack of connection with the community and the inability of the store to extend lines of credit to *favela* residents.

Casas Bahia's representative suggested that digital inclusion projects would help strengthen a corporate connection with the community and act as an alternative form of security.

While he did not use the word utopia, I found that the representative's assertion that a socially informed technology project could mitigate insecurity in the community paralleled CDI's general mission of including the *favela* and it's NCM in Brazilian society. These types of projects were important for both Brazil's NCM and Casas Bahia's corporate expansion. Digital inclusion projects allowed Casas Bahia to demonstrate their investment in corporate patronage, as well as in a politer form of neoliberal consumerism.

At the time of Casas Bahia's opening, concepts of middleclass-ness were undergoing a dramatic and inclusionary transformation in Brazil. CDI's traditionally middleclass workers, for example, represent generations of accumulated social status, cultural capital, and economic wealth. The best-paid employees at CDI were white and from middleclass or elite backgrounds. They were the product of a capitalist system that first benefited white colonizers and slavers, then the children of European immigrants that came to Brazil in the early part of the twentieth century. At the turn of the millennium, this entrenched and reproductive nature of racialized class relationships in Brazil began to make a dramatic shift towards embracing an ascendant working class from the country's afro-descendent communities. Between 2003 and 2013, Brazil's ruling party, *o Partido de Trabalhador* (Workers' Party, or PT), capitalized on the stability of the national currency and the high value of commodities to fund expansive social welfare programs in the country's social and economic periphery. Alongside health and housing programs that reflected more traditional concepts of socialist welfare, the PT promoted a middleclass consumer lifestyle through broad economic formalization policies (improving labor

laws, registering of work papers, promoting stronger property rights, encouraging bank accounts, and giving greater access to higher education). As a result, nine million households, or 30 million Brazilians, rose out of poverty into the NCM. The PT's goal was not to simply create a nation of consumers, but rather to include people in a market that was historically exclusive and inclined to cause human suffering through intense poverty. A culture that could consume cheaply made Chinese electronics was viewed as a side effect and an added benefit.

The problem of access to digital technology discussed by information utopists was solved in a large part through the NCM's growing consumer power. During this period, Brazil transformed into the world's second largest consumer of personal electronic devices (Tecmundo 2013).[17] *Favelas* accounted for 65% of the NCM (Quaino 2013). The NCM embraced a bourgeois consumptive lifestyle, spending R$1 trillion (US$494 billion) on consumer goods each year (D'Agostino 2012), but rarely invested in more durable forms of household capital like education, healthcare, and real-estate (Kerstenetzky 2015). By the start of my research, digital technologies such as smartphones and social media were a noticeable element of *favela* life. Google released a study showing that 54% of Brazil's Internet users were from the lower classes. The director of research for Google Brazil affirmed, "[*Favela* residents] are the new owners of the Brazilian Internet" (Matsurra 2015). Multinational corporations—such as Google, Microsoft, and Facebook—who stood to profit from the growth of a consumer electronics

[17] Brazil's federal value-added tax (the *IPI)* places a 42% tax on most industrial goods while states like São Paulo can add up to 18% more. Secondary costs imposed by sellers can result in most consumer goods being twice the price as what can be found in U.S. stores. In 2011, the Chinese electronic manufacture *Foxconn* opened an *Apple Ipad* and *Iphone* factory in Brazil in order to skirt many of these taxes(Heim 2015).
http://www.tecmundo.com.br/mercado/38519-brasil-um-dos-maiores-consumidores-de-eletronicos.htm

industry in the *favela* provided millions of dollars in funds to NGOs with digital inclusion programs. These companies wanted not just consumers, but digital citizens who could play a role in a broader globalized society.

Converting a Fine

One day Baggio and I sat in his office as he practiced his TED talk. I asked what he thought about digital inclusion in the Complexo do Alemão, the recently pacified *favela* where I lived and where CDI had carried out various projects over the previous twenty years. He mentioned a former drug dealer, Wanderson, who now worked for CDI and whom I had gotten to know. Baggio then indulged the same anti-utopic imagination that he used to describe his digital inclusion projects to corporations and *favela* activists: "You know what I wish we did? What I always wanted instead of this 'pacification'? We should have invaded the *favela* with social projects, with activists, instead of police." Baggio invoked the seemingly peaceful and self-reflective form of cultural revolution that Paulo Freire had advocated and viewed CDI as a positive agent of utopic disruption. In describing a more utopic society than the one realized by pacification policy, Baggio imagined digital inclusion as an alternative to the exclusionary and violent government policies in the *favela*. Rather than being opposed to the state as Baggio suggests, however, I observed that digital inclusion NGOs like CDI shared a set of political goals with pacification policy—specifically, economic formalization, the mitigation of violence, and the fostering of a more included form of citizenship. While Baggio described himself as opposed to the state, he often partnered with the government and embraced its policy ambitions.

My co-workers described one of CDI's most important mediating functions to me as a process of "converting the fine" (*convertar a multa*). The conversion of fines is a slow, grant-based process where government ministries allow corporations to support NGOs instead of

paying regulatory fines. In this sense, Baggio embodied the technophilic logics found throughout Brazil's science and technology community (Goldstein 2017). Development policy embraced technology for its potential to change, ignoring its limits and ability to harm. This messy nature of corporate sponsorship represents one of the more notable limits of Brazil's techno-development discourse. Corporations delegate the planning and implementation of social projects to middle-class NGOs. Middleclass NGOs in turn help *favela*-based NGOs to acquire material resources, professional training, and institutional visibility. As a result, what started as a regulatory infraction transforms into resources for a marginalized community. Converting a fine allows a spectrum of social actors—the corporation, the NGO, the government, and the local activist—to share credit for the positive result of a social action. Furthermore, since the actual steps that go into converting a fine are often the least visible part of a social project, those who take part can project their own class-based sets of meaning onto the process of utopic change.

For example, the Brazilian government levied numerous fines against Casas Bahia for illegal labor practices and defrauding customers. Instead of paying the fines outright, Casas Bahia made an agreement with the government to redirect their fines towards the third sector. Casas Bahia announced a competition for the money. CDI applied and won a significant amount of funding to operate a digital inclusion program across several *favelas*. In the end, Casas Bahia was able to shift the narrative away from its own impropriety and towards its part in facilitating positive change. CDI demonstrated an ability to communicate across classes and the *favela* residents received resources that would have otherwise been unavailable to them.

Converting a fine requires a significant amount of institutional resources on the part of CDI. CDI hired at least four individuals that reworked previous projects for new funding opportunities. Theo, the grant writer who I quoted above on his reasoning for not entering a *favela*, told me that he had friends from university who worked in the private sector and who alerted him to several companies that were looking to convert million-dollar fines. This knowledge allowed him to design projects and grant proposals around specific corporate objectives. Theo explained to me, "They have to spend the money. The money is just there and if no one takes it, it goes right to the government. All you need is an idea that corresponds with their mission and experience implementing projects, and you can usually have a chance of getting the funds."

By converting a fine, NGOs like CDI could realize their potential as mediating agents for multinational corporations and corporately funded charities as well as city, state, and federal government ministries. In line with Baggio's opinion concerning the corporate nature of CDI, Theo described this process as a necessity in a modern world and a positive step towards CDI's broader mission of digital disruption. He believed that CDI lacked the institutional strength and financial stability to effectively promote economic development on its own (Suleiman 2012). By helping corporations like Casas Bahia to convert their fines, CDI received a stable flow of grant money and increased institutional clout without sacrificing their moral and ethical ability to "do good."

CDI and Casas Bahia were not the only entities to convert fines as a means to achieve a form of digital utopia. After a *favela* was pacified, outside actors such as middleclass NGOs and

businesses flocked to the community.[18] In the Complexo do Alemão alone, the government had partnered with or helped to create over a dozen digital inclusion projects. Multinational corporations like Coca-Cola, Unilever, Microsoft, O Globo, and Petrobras sponsored their own digital inclusion projects within local *favela*-based NGOs. By converting a fine, electronics vendors and telecommunication companies often suggested that that they were volunteering resources towards digital inclusion projects. Casas Bahia painted a socially conscious face on its expansion into *favela* markets and sponsored several digital inclusion projects in collaboration with CDI. By doing so, Casas Bahia shared its own set of utopic aspirations with digital inclusion NGOs and *favela* clients. Converting a fine, in this sense, transformed a legal negative into a symbolic positive.

Beyond the financial benefits of the process, NGOs also stood to improve their public image through converting a fine. Many of my co-workers at CDI considered converting a fine to be a more transparent and ethical practice than the traditional practice of paying fines directly to government agencies, or the funding of NGOs with anonymous contributions. NGOs were often viewed with skepticism in the broader Brazilian society. As the result of a post-dictatorship push towards more professional and institutional NGOs, organizations like CDI had become relatively elite institutions that lost appeal within the *favelas* they served (Gonzalez 2009, 137). NGOs were increasingly seen as agents of outside institutions that helped to

[18] Digital inclusion also allowed projects to appear political neutral despite a wide network of institutional actors from all parts of the Brazilian State that were involved Bete—who ran a digital inclusion project sponsored by Coca-cola that began after pacification—told me, "I've never asked anyone if they were a drug dealer." She explained to me that it is often a non-subject and the knowledge does not affect the type of assistance that she could provide local residents. In other words, there were no specific age or demographic outside of the *favela* targeted by these projects. Youth often had the most free time and were the majority of participants.

facilitate elite actors (Hammami 1995; Murdock 2003). Because of their social, economic, and political distance from the people they claimed to serve, NGOs were associated with corruption. One of the more noteworthy examples of this is found in the award-winning Brazilian film *Quanto Vale ou É Por Kilo* (*What is Life Worth*, 2005). *Quanto Vale* tells the story of a digital inclusion NGO that overprices a set of computers destined for a *favela*. The film connects NGOs with Brazil's history of slavery and depicts the marketing of social development as a façade that exploits middle class NGOs for personal gain.

I found little evidence in my own work of the type of bitterness and corruption presented by *Quanto Vale*. However, the film reflects a documented reality of corruption within Brazil's NGOs; more than 700 NGOs were closed by Brazil's federal government for financial irregularities between 2011 and 2012. Public and corporate resources are funneled through Brazilian NGOs, often with limited accountability, and this has been tied to the criminal misappropriation of public funds. By converting a fine, NGOs leveraged an image of transparency and inclusion as a means to symbolically challenge the appearance of corruption. Corporations, while operating unethically at times, were villainized far more for their exploitation of workers than for their outright corruption. Because of this, CDI and the other digital inclusion NGOs that I observed, often placed corporate names front and center when advertising their programs. For example, a graduate of a digital inclusion program sponsored by Coca-Cola told me that, "employers don't trust the name of an NGO on a working certificate. They trust Coca-Cola and know Coca-Cola. It makes my certificate worth a lot more to have Coca-Cola supporting my search for work."

Despite the financial symbolism provided by corporations like Microsoft and Casas Bahia, many of CDI's employees were skeptical about the long-term viability of the NGO in light of pervasive corruption and the constant possibility that their model for converting fines may dry up. They understood the system of converting fines as being subject to the boom and bust periods that have shocked Brazil's commodity-based economy dating back centuries (Mattos 2008). These fears partially came to fruition during the 2008 financial crisis when international sponsors began to cut their support of NGOs. This pattern repeated itself in late 2014 when Brazil slipped into economic and political crisis. Sales of electronic consumer goods decreased in 2014 after more than ten years of economic growth (Jalmayer 2015). Brazil's socially progressive government was replaced by an austerity-minded government made up of individuals who believed that NGOs were corrupt, and that Paulo Freire's pedagogies could lead to a communist dictatorship. In the Complexo alone, dozens of digital inclusion projects were quickly abandoned. The Brazilian government and elite corporations increasingly saw digital inclusion as superfluous and wasteful despite years of corporate and governmental proclamations of an imminent utopia.

Baggio adapted to these concerns by redirecting most of CDI's resources to an online app designing platform. While *favelas* remained the focus of CDI's work, the NGO's physical presence in *favelas* was dramatically diminished. CDI recruited a number of *favela*-based activists to promote the new online platform over social media. Many of these activists were *favela* youth who had passed through a CDI program years before and had since used their online profiles to critique police abuse in their communities. One activist from the Complexo posted a video that discussed the app and explained "I know the idea of digital utopia sounds

unrealistic, but it is possible, and we are working with CDI to make it a reality."(Author's Notes May 19th, 2016).

As this activist suggested, the most durable feature developed by CDI's programs is not necessarily the hard technical skills required for working in an international NGO, but rather an optimism for the future and a faith that digital technology can bring about a better world. A shift from a physical space to a digital one represented an evolution of the neoliberal utopic ideals that CDI has promoted for much of its history. By eliminating the physical space required for digital inclusion, CDI achieved all of its most important ideological and institutional goals without being subject to issues of classed space. And the Complexo's ascendant NCM appeared ideologically aligned with a digital world that does not overlap with the physical.

Conclusion

CDI provides an example of how NGOs promote utopic aesthetics in Brazil's *favelas,* and how digital utopia is often imagined through the prerogative of class-based organizations. Activities such as converting a fine demonstrate that an idealized digital world is imagined both through moral conviction and socio-economic practicality. Digital inclusion motivates and inspires CDI's employees to maintain their own elements of middleclass-ness. The growth of a consumer class in the *favela*, the NCM, has been a blessing for organizations and communities seeking to intervene in marginalized communities and provoke a digital utopia. This emergent class-between-classes provides evidence that digital technology can help to build bridges between once segregated groups. However, the connection between digital inclusion NGOs and an aspirational NCM contains a hidden politics of consumerism and corporate exploitation. As an ethnographer, CDI provides an opportunity to ask how class informs ideas of a better world,

how inclusionary ideals reproduce exclusionary spaces, and what this means for the disruptive potentials of digital technology.

Chapter Four

The Educator and the Educated: The Politics of a Critical Digital Pedagogy in Rio's *Favelas*

In previous chapters I discuss the hidden politics of digital reproduction in Rio de Janeiro's *favelas*. I provide examples of how an ideal of digital inclusion reproduces classed spaces and problematic understandings of everyday violence. In this chapter, I build on the imperfect realizations of digital disruption and reproduction to describe an NGO named TV Verde (Green TV) that applied Paulo Freire's problem-posing education to a digital filmmaking course. Following Freire, TV Verde practiced what I call a *critical digital pedagogy* that promoted the disruptive potentials of technology through a non-hierarchical and informal teaching style. TV Verde is an example of small scale *favela*-based NGOs that receive funding from the Brazilian State through the patronage of a political party. Much as I have done with the examples from earlier chapters, I argue that the potentials for a critical digital pedagogy in the Complexo are often limited by the realities of structural violence, class, and elite politics.

Reflecting upon my classroom observation of TV Verde over the course of a year, I ask: How is Freire's critical pedagogy interpreted in the digital age? How is a critical digital pedagogy adapted to unique socio-economic and political conditions? And what can projects like TV Verde reveal about the hidden politics of digital reproduction? There are notable similarities between Freire's pedagogical approach and the methods of *favela*-based digital inclusion programs. Embracing Freire, TV Verde sought to disrupt a dialectical relationship between teacher and student, create locally informed representations, and cultivate a sustained critical praxis. Visual technology played an essential role in TV Verde's pedagogical process, as well as for a broader activist community that emerged from similar digital inclusion NGOs. Revealing a

set of hidden politics, TV Verde's critical digital pedagogy at times merged with a form of political patronage that softened the ideological and ethical positions of the NGO's educators and called into question the underlying purpose of State support for the project. These politics are unsurprising given that both TV Verde and Freire present learning as a political experience capable of disrupting the types of structural violence found in the Complexo.

A Critical Pedagogy

Felipe, an educator at TV Verde, stood in front of a classroom and asked "Do you know the history of the *favela*?"(Author's field notes May 2014) The question, he hoped, would produce a critical discussion about the Complexo do Alemão's place in the world. Felipe was a month into a semester-long workshop that introduced *favela* youth to filmmaking. His workshops were unplanned and his *dever de casa* (homework) included more recommended than obligatory activities. Felipe had yet to give what resembled a formal lecture and instead used images, YouTube clips, and feature-length films to encourage discussion about the Complexo's social and physical environment. This discussion allowed TV Verde's participants to develop a collective but critical understanding of life in the Complexo.

After a muted response to his initial question, Felipe attempted something more open-ended: "Where are we?" There were several obvious answers to Felipe's second question. TV Verde's participants had already discussed the social remoteness they felt living in the Complexo. Street level violence forced participants to lock themselves in their homes over fear of *pegando uma bala* (catching a bullet). Limited access to public transportation restricted participants from easily traveling outside of the community. TV Verde's classroom, the immediate location where Felipe asked his question, had a unique feeling to it as well. The

room was tucked away on the third floor of a recently built *teleférico* (cable car) station. Waiting for a response to his question, Felipe stood silently with the distinct hum of seven kilometers of *teleférico* cable winding overhead. The sterile white-painted concrete confines of the room contrasted with the hodgepodge of cinderblock shacks that lay just outside the door. Nonetheless, the young Complexo residents in the room remained silent and appeared confused by the simplicity of Felipe's question.

Felipe once again broke the silence and asked, "What is the *favela*?" Luis, a 17-year-old student from the Complexo, timidly raised his hand: "The *favela* is poor." His straightforward response caused the room to break out in laughter.

Hoping to capitalize on the crescendo, Felipe offered a quick retort, "Why is the *favela* poor?" The room returned to silence. Felipe, as if on cue, opened up a PowerPoint slideshow and projected a set of black and white images of the Complexo from the 1960s. The images showed underdeveloped tropical hills and dirt roads, images that contrasted with the dense honeycomb of concrete and smog that the youth walked through everyday. Felipe told the history of "*o Alemão*" ("the German"), a Polish immigrant and the namesake of the Complexo. The German parceled off pieces of land that later fractured informally into smaller and smaller lots, each with their own home and their own history. Felipe reminded participants of a documentary that they had watched together called *Notícias de uma Guerra Particular* (1999). The documentary was produced before many of TV Verde's participants were born and provided an informal history concerning the violent ideologies of the traffickers and police that governed the Complexo. Felipe showed pictures of the UPP (Pacifying Police Units), *Policia Militar* (military police), and *Bope* (the "Elite Squad," or SWAT team) as they patrolled through

the community. Felipe was well aware of the fact that some in the room were only ten years old when the police established themselves in the Complexo for the first time.

The last set of imagery, as well as Felipe's open-ended questions, prompted Amanda, an 18-year-old from the *favela*, to respond frankly, "People think the *favela* is trash." Amanda's statement, although blunt and not an opinion that she shared with the hypothetical *pessoas* (people), inspired an hour-and-a-half conversation about the social exclusion and violence endured by *favela* residents. Participants related Felipe's images to representations of the Complexo that they saw on television and the Internet. One participant described a police helicopter that hovered over her house and woke her family earlier that morning. Another mentioned seeing his home on television during a live broadcast of police operations in the Complexo. Others told stories of their families dodging shootouts inside of their homes, and the paths that they took in order to avoid crossing armed traffickers and police.

At the end of that discussion, Felipe advised participants to remember their personal histories in the Complexo because they would help to inform TV Verde's final film project. Felipe's pedagogical goal was not to impart specific pieces of information such as the dictionary definition of a *favela*, the statistics behind the community's poverty, or how to use a digital camera to duplicate the historical images he presented via PowerPoint. Rather, he hoped to stimulate a conversation about the normalcy of these images, how locals experienced structural violence, and the obstacles that kept residents from challenging the inequality in their lives.

Conversations like the one that Felipe had with TV Verde's participants demonstrate what I call a *critical digital pedagogy*, a learning model that deconstructs authoritative narratives through the development of a socially informed technical literacy. Much like Felipe,

the majority of digital inclusion educators with whom I spoke cited Paulo Freire's work *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1971) as a major influence on their teaching. Felipe, for example, told me about the first time he read Freire as a high schooler. He told me, "It made sense, I never liked to read, but Freire told me that I was reading incorrectly and reading the wrong things. It was a quasi-epiphany that I didn't realize I had until I worked as an educator." The three other educators at TV Verde, each of whom had their own classrooms and freedom to define curriculum, shared with me similar stories of Freire inspiring their views on education. And, while few of the dozens of educators whom I interviewed described an explicit desire to introduce *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* to their classrooms, they unanimously agreed that Freire's problem-posing model was essential to the development of a visual and technical literacy for residents of the *favela*.

Freire describes critical pedagogy as an informal model of education that pushes against a traditional system of education. Traditional teaching models reinforce strict roles for teachers and students that disguise the ethical relationship between knowledge and power (Freire 1971, 10). Students "bank" information and are taught to uncritically reproduce dates, facts, and ideologies. Through an education based on hierarchy and authority, teachers do not communicate with their students as much as they shape students into passive and manageable individuals. Formal education submerges individuals into systems of domination and promotes authoritative knowledge that is "ready to wear." Freire calls this arrangement a "fear of freedom" that sustains a critical silence concerning authoritative forms of knowledge (Freire 1971, 76).

To be fully human and liberated from oppression, Freire argues that the oppressed and their allies must invest in a critical discussion about the underlying contradictions produced by authoritative knowledge. Freire promoted a dynamic between *educadores* (educators) and *os educados* (the educated) where the educator encourages a critical consciousness in the educated through a mutually constructed discourse. Educators should also be "cultural workers" by studying the context where they work, taking an "inventory" of the key words used by the community, understanding their beliefs, and comparing how the educator's desires conflict with the demands imposed upon them by a dominant society (Freire 1998; Giroux 2007). Cultural workers become successful educators when they use their knowledge to pose problems to the educated in ways that reveal the complexity of individual authority in an oppressive society.

Freire believed that literacy, reading, and writing allows individuals to perceive the inherent contradictions in their world and challenge oppressive forms of knowing (Wright 2011, 13). Through "reading" in a technical sense of comprehension and composition as well as to "reading the world" by using literacy to address the oppression in their lives, Freire describes how technical skills are infused with liberating knowledge (Freire 1972, 114–16). More than creating new types of authoritative information, Freire promotes a praxis of cultural creation as the principle means to oppose oppressive knowledge (Glass 2001). He states that "this pedagogy makes oppression and its cause objects of reflection by the oppressed, and from that reflection will come their necessary engagement in the struggle for their liberation. And, in the struggle this pedagogy will be made and remade" (Freire 1998, 36). He calls this process

conscientização (conscientization), the act of becoming a knowing subject of one's socio-cultural reality and the recognition of one's capacity to transform this reality.

In more practical terms, Freire implemented a problem-posing education that promoted basic literacy in largely illiterate agrarian communities in Latin America. He carried out a critical pedagogical model at weeklong events attended by thousands that he called *círculos de cultura* (culture circles). At cultural circles, Freire conducted a number of activities that deconstructed knowledge and reconstructed it as a productive and liberating force. For one of his more classic activities, Freire broke down culturally authoritative words such as *favela* by their syllables—i.e., *fa-ve-la*. Participants were then shown a family of related syllables: *Fa, Fe, Fi, Fo, Fu*. These syllables were re-combined into more complicated words and ideas that would then lead to conversations about the authoritative nature of knowledge.

Notably, Freire used 1970s slide projectors during his cultural circles. He believed that slide projectors collectivized learning and allowed a critical pedagogy to travel to remote communities (Sayers & Brown 1993). While traveling around agrarian communities in Brazil's northeast, Freire projected images of modern and pre-modern technologies. He broke down the words that the educated used to describe these pictures syllable by syllable and then used the fractured text that these syllables created to make logical connects with other words. These new words could then be used to advance critical praxis and conscientization. He called the images "codified pictures" that, when presented through a slide projector, allowed peasants to visualize their culture-making and communicative potentials (Bee 1981). With these images, Freire encouraged the educated to analyze the socially constructed and unnatural conditions of peasant life.

Though Freire passed away in the late 1990s, before the Internet became popularly accessible in Brazil, his use of slide projectors offers insight into how he may have adapted a critical pedagogy to the information age. TV Verde employed digital technology for participatory filmmaking workshop in a similar way that Freire used slide projectors during culture circles. Felipe, for example, used PowerPoint presentations to present images that could lead to a broader critical discussion about the nature of *favela* life.

Furthermore, Freire's ideas, while not directly related, invoke a number of significant parallels with scholarly approaches to participatory filmmaking. Much like other critical digital pedagogy projects that I observed while in Rio, participatory filmmaking projects hope to develop soft social and hard technical skills, promote civic responsibility, and inspire more inclusionary politics (Buckingham et al 1995; Goodman 2003; Bennett 2008; Cohen & Kahne 2012; Coleman 2007; Loader 2007). This approach follows a broader current in the art world that encourages marginalized communities to imagine and re-create themselves in a self-realized political space (Ginsberg 1998, 191). Participatory filmmaking also mediates political, classed, and racialized experiences (Blum-Rose 2014) and can heighten students' perceptions of a social world (Pink 2006). A comparison of Felipe's university-educated, middle-class background with that of TV Verde's participants from the Complexo offers just one example of how participatory filmmaking can encourage a diversity of perspectives.

Anthropologists also suggest that visual media and digital platforms help to de-territorialize identity (Spitulnick 1993, 293) and create new ways of viewing the local (Abu-Lughod 1997). Participants Felipe taught technical skills while also encouraging students to reflect upon their cultural context, to "de-code" the authoritative representations of the

Complexo, and to create new visual narratives that could better represent the reality of *favela* life (Freire 1973). De-coding allowed TV Verde's educados to create a perspective that was more critical of the ways human's influence their environment and discover ways that individuals in their community could mitigate their more destructive impacts. In this sense, the ultimate goal of both Freire's slide projector and TV Verde's digital camera was to create a political praxis that individuals could apply to a broader set of both political and everyday settings.

Visual Representations of the *Favela*

Alongside practicing Freire's problem-posing educational approach, TV Verde and its educators were also inspired by trends in Brazilian *Cinema Nacional* (National Cinema) that promoted contexts and characters from underrepresented communities. For much of the twentieth century, authoritative governments and international media conglomerates controlled what types of films were produced in Brazil. During the military dictatorship of the 1970s and 1980s, art was influenced by a set of hidden politics not unlike the subtle and unspoken politics of digital inclusion programs. As products of oppressive regimes, these films presented a politically convenient idea of racial, social, and classed harmony. Brazilian cinema avoided political critique and produced mostly love stories, historical stories that supported a nationalist narrative of racial democracy, and more grotesque abstractions of human nature based in surreal interpretations of classic Brazilian literature. With a few noteworthy exceptions towards the end of the dictatorship such as *Bye Bye Brasil* (1980) and *Pixote* (1981), films of this era avoided direct political statements about socio-economic inequality in Brazil. There was also a highly popular genre of sex comedies called *pornochanchada* that, despite their frequent critique of conservative social mores, also avoided the allusion to political critique.

Following re-democratization in the 1980s, however, Brazil's federal government modernized its film agency, *Acine*, and attempted to limit political influence over the types of stories that its filmmakers told. This *retomada* (retaking) of *cinema nacional* was supported by billions of dollars in government funds and encouraged Brazil's film industry to grow into one of the world's largest. *Retomada* films such as the internationally renowned *Central Station* (1998) and *City of God* (2003) tell stories that embrace working-class Brazilians as multi-dimensional protagonists, and often productions that showcased actors, writers, and directors from *favelas*.

Despite these more democratic themes, critics of the *retomoda* argue that the increased cinematic visibility of the *favela* simply made "poverty consumable" and only allowed for a token form of inclusion into Brazil's elite entertainment industry (Bentes 2007, 244). Others argue that *cinema nacional* only played lip service to diversity and perpetuated crime talk that associated poverty with criminality and implied that *favela* residents bore the principle responsibility for violence between police and drug traffickers (Caldeira 1991; Naiff & Naiff 2005).

Visual depictions of the Complexo exemplify *cinema nacional*'s tendency to produce alienated depictions of poor communities. There are dozens of notable depictions of the Complexo in *cinema nacional*, none more notable than the 2014 action film *Alemão.* In the vein of John Carpenter's 1976 cult classic *Assault on Precinct 13*, *Alemão* tells the fictional story of five undercover police officers who are trapped in the Complexo when the army decides to pacify the community. The film depicts police as emotionally and morally complex individuals, while locals are represented as either drug-fueled murderers driven by their hatred of the law,

or as ignorant residents that blindly support traffickers and revel in the superficial gifts of drug lords.

Following the problematic trends of representation found in *cinema nacional*'s *retomada*, *Alemão*'s production conflated a thematic proximity with emotional authenticity. *Alemão*'s lead actor Caio Blat stated in an interview that "What's cool is to see [Complexo residents] feel proud to see their story told in the cinema" (Astuto 2014). Many in the Complexo did not share Blat's sentiment. Besides a few days of onsite production, the majority of *Alemão* was filmed on a sound stage miles from the community. *Alemão* was never shown at the Complexo's state-of-the-art government-built movie theatre.[19] Often described as Rio's most profitable, the movie theatre almost exclusively plays Hollywood-produced films such as *Harry Potter* (2001), *The Avengers* (2012), and *Frozen* (2014). During my time in the Complexo, which overlapped with the debut of *Alemão*, the theater only showed one film that took place in a *favela*: the internationally-distributed animated film *Rio 2* (2014) that told the story of anthropomorphized birds fleeing poachers from Rio's Rocinha *favela*. Instead of seeing the movie in local theatres, the majority of the community waited two years for the film to debut on broadcast television. After *Alemão* was shown on television, several residents took to online social media to complain about the fantastical violent depiction of the community that included rocket launchers and big budget explosions. Residents also critiqued what appeared to be a lack of involvement of locals in the film's production.

[19] Through the program *CineCarioca* the city government partnered with the national theater chain *Kinoplex* to install, buildings with "high quality 3D projection rooms at accessible prices in areas where there are few options for cultural equipment."

TV Verde's goal was, in a large part, to subvert the alienated depictions of the *favela* found in films like *Alemão* by encouraging residents to construct more authentic representations of their communities. For many of TV Verde's educators, digital technology and informal concepts of education were essential to continuing work of a previous generation of vanguard filmmakers. Educators like Felipe sought to continue the progress made during the *retomada* of *cinema nacional and* imagined filmmaking as a means to challenge a broader history of misrepresentation. Felipe and his colleagues suggested that participatory filmmaking projects could inspire the next generation of filmmakers, present humanistic Brazilian stories, and upset the exclusive nature of cultural production in the Complexo. As graduates of Brazil's principle film schools, TV Verde's educators continued one of the more socially-progressive goals of *cinema nacional*: attempting to amplify marginalized perspectives in Brazilian film through direct and sustained engagement in poor communities. In this respect, TV Verde was an embodiment of some of the more vanguardish methodologies in both *cinema nacional* and the field of digital development.

The educators were highly aware of the crime talk that permeated Brazil's film industry and the bureaucratic difficultly many independent filmmakers encountered in procuring government funds. Felipe, however, often offered hope to those at TV Verde and promised, "If you have a story about your community, we will go get money from the government. There are billions just waiting there and no one is asking for it." Felipe implied that youth had relevant stories to tell and that they could receive support from the same dominant institutions that produce previous, alienating stories about their community.

NGOs and Formal Education in the Complexo

TV Verde was one of several NGOs with a desire to counteract popular misrepresentations of the Complexo by encouraging youth to use technology. Over the course of my research, 43 NGOs and thirteen digital inclusion projects operated in the Complexo. After speaking with educators at most of these projects, I estimated that over 3,000 residents participated in digital inclusion programs in the Complexo, with more than two hundred completing TV Verde's semester-long workshops. TV Verde followed a pattern of many NGOs in recruiting participants between 14 and 28 years old. This age group encompassed approximately one third of the Complexo's population, and the vast majority of individuals who attended institutions of formal education (IBGE 2012). Digital inclusion projects normally held serialized workshops that imparted technical skills (such as social media campaigning, digital photography, and filmmaking) alongside discussions of social concerns like environmental sustainability, community health, and the continued transmission of oral history. Most educators with whom I spoke in the Complexo, including Felipe and his colleagues at TV Verde, expressed the belief that NGOs were an essential complement to public high schools and degree-granting technical training programs.

For much of the community's 70-year history, there were no schools within the Complexo. By the time I arrived in the community, the Complexo was the least literate and least educated neighborhood in the city of Rio de Janeiro. Only 70% of the Complexo's residents were functionally literate (UPP Social 2012). The average resident had only five years of formal schooling. Less than one percent had attended, much less graduated from, a four-year university. Recognizing the need to provide education after the Complexo's 2010 pacification,

the government built two grade schools, a high school, and an adult-oriented technical school. By 2012, 1,300 students in the Complexo, out of approximately 6,000 residents that were aged 15 to 19, attended the new high school. Educational institutions were becoming increasingly accessible to residents in the years leading up to and overlapping my time observing TV Verde.

However, the quality of education offered by these institutions remained dubious, and the government's security policy often counteracted any positive investments in formal education. Activists in the Complexo often complained that the government dedicated more funds towards security programs than to public education—R$1.5 million, or around US$500,000) more per day to be exact.[20] Of the five high schools that I visited during my research, I recorded 40 to 65 students per classroom. In most classrooms, textbooks were shared between two to four students each and they could not be taken home for study. In terms of digital inclusion, only two of the schools that I visited had a computer lab, and these labs had only eight computers for hundreds of students. Needless to say, the educators I spoke with believed that these resources were insufficient for a community already at the bottom of Rio's socio-economic and educational indicators.

A hidden politics of class and violence often overwhelmed more idealistic hopes concerning education in the *favela*. Most public-school teachers were middleclass university graduates. I only met one teacher who was born and raised in the Complexo, a 24-year-old part-time activist and full-time high school history teacher named Jose. We met at a bar near

[20] REZENDE, CONSTANÇA. "Mais Segurança E Menos Educação No Orçamento Do Estado Em 2016." *O Dia*. O Dia, 30 Aug. 2015. Web. 21 Oct. 2015.
WERNECK, ANTÔNIO. "Presença De Militares Na Maré Custa R$ 1,7 Milhão Por Dia." *O Globo*. O Globo, 26 May 2014. Web. 21 Oct. 2015.

his school after an activist event. As a teacher roughly the age of some of TV Verde's participants, one of my initial questions for Jose concerned his long-term career plans in the community. I was also interested in how he saw himself compared to the other teachers. He told me that "the older teachers that have been here more time are really intelligent. But they're tired. This job makes you tired of everything." Jose continued to describe his youth in the Complexo, the teachers who inspired him, and some of his middleclass teacher colleagues who were obviously overwhelmed by the conditions of schools in the *favela*. I asked what he thought about working within the confines of a formal educational system compared to less formal projects like TV Verde. He responded,

> This is necessary work. People need to learn and feel like they are something bigger, that they are a community, a nation. There is value with NGOs and activists, without a doubt, but social projects give a limited ability to empower…I don't know anything more effective for students than a school that functions. No school functions all the time, educators are not perfect. Criticism of what we do here does not help our objective. We can't teach based on other people's criticism.

With this, Jose implied that formal schooling offered a more holistic education than informal projects like TV Verde. He also pushed back at an overly idealized concept of education that was successful at retaining and educating students in a context like the Complexo. He furthermore asserted that there needed to be more faith in the position of the teacher to guide students, and that criticism from outside parties presented an additional obstacle. Rather than promoting abstract goals such as a critical digital pedagogy, he suggested that formal and institutionalized forms of education offered a uniquely inclusionary experience.

I also spoke with a retired schoolteacher named Luciana who repeated Jose's opinion about the relationship between traditional teachers and their students. We met at her

apartment in the solidly middleclass neighborhood of Vila Isabel and spoke over a cup of coffee. She told me,

> I was always very optimistic. I had students who were drug dealers or hung around traffickers. I hugged them. I engaged them equally. I always looked for something in common with them and never had a problem with violence against me. I've accepted their problems inside of my classroom. But, schools are not the best place for people with problems. Problems with family or the police. Or family. I had many good students who got pregnant and came back three years later. Other students needed to work. Others were arrested. I don't know how many just disappeared, they stopped studying.

I asked Luciana if there was any effort made by the state or the school to keep children in class, such as truant officers supervising absentee students. She responded, "There's no money for teachers or for police. We have to just hope that the students return." As I spoke with Luciana, her words sounded both socially and historically distant from the Complexo. She empathized with her students, but their problems were different from her own, and she seemed to think that being a trafficker or a young mother was not something that should happen to students. In contrast with the precepts of informal and non-hierarchical pedagogies like those practiced by TV Verde, she suggested that deviation from a traditional schooling made students either harder to educate or incapable of receiving an education.

Both Luciana and Jose also suggested that the day to day of public education in Brazil is rife not only with the difficulty of teaching an underserviced community, but also with the difficulty of navigating an apathetic and weakened bureaucracy. They demonstrate how traditional educators must negotiate a set of idealized expectations and entrenched socio-economic realities. I found that most in the community understood teachers to be well intentioned and their students to be faced with innumerable socio-economic challenges. In this sense, few activists and educators blamed individuals for the poor quality of education in the

Complexo. Rather, observers recognized institutional arrangements to be central to the problem.

Beyond the institutional challenges faced by teachers and students, street-level violence was an almost constant threat to the Complexo's schools. To put the community's experience with violence into a global context, a report published by UNICEF compared education in the Complexo to education in the Gaza strip.[21] I heard countless anecdotes from teachers, students, and activists about classrooms being caught in the crossfire between drug traffickers and police. Many of these anecdotes revolved around tales of drug gangs targeting the Complexo's newly built high school after the UPP installed a police post inside the building. Videos frequently appeared on social media that showed students sprawled out on classroom floors and taking cover as nearby police operations erupted into shootouts near their schools. Other videos showed teachers playing guitars in order to calm their students as the sound of automatic weapons clattered behind them. Locals believed that security policy (pacification) allowed the police to remain ambivalent towards relocating their base and emboldened them to advance more violent security strategies, even in the presence of children.

Another example of school violence happened within a minute's walk from my home. The government refashioned a shipping container into a police post and installed it next to a daycare at the center of the community. Three months after the container's installation, a shootout between traffickers and police left 76 holes in the school's exterior walls. A few nights later, a firefight forced the police to evacuate their container and confiscate an automotive

[21] "UNICEF Compare a Situação de Crianças do Complexo do Alemão com a Faixa de Gaza" Folha Online. June 29th, 2007. accessed October 20th, 2015 from http://www1.folha.uol.com.br/folha/cotidiano/ult95u308411.shtml

repair garage that also neighbored the school. Once the shootout ended, the police refused to leave, fortifying their position. In the coming weeks the post became a frequent target for potshots from traffickers and a central staging area for nightly police raids into the community. The situation caused uproar among residents in the Complexo who often took to social media to specifically complain about the failure of police to mitigate the school's exposure to violence. When confronted with the story within the first few days of the garage's occupation, Rio's security minister and the chief architect of security policy in the community, Jose Beltrame, promised the post's immediate removal.[22] However, six months later and with the garage still being occupied by police, Beltrame announced the construction of a more advanced security post in the area and promised to find space for six new social projects in exchange.[23]

Security policy was unable to predict or mitigate police violence around Rio's schools. NGOs and other social projects were often given as compensation for failures in more formal institutions. Nonetheless, many in the community recognized that NGOs like TV Verde were limited in both financial and institutional scope and believed that social projects could only complement but not replace the social and cultural importance of a traditional education. The balancing act between formal and informal education was clear. Educators at both NGOs and traditional schools appeared to appreciate one another's pedagogical goals and implied that a greater level of institutional resources, in any form, was needed given the structural violence in the Complexo.

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[22] Paola Serra. "Base De UPP Em Terreno De Escola No Complexo Do Alemão Será Desativada." *Extra Online*. N.p., 07 May 2015. Web. 21 Oct. 2015.

[23] Casas Novas, Betinho. "Com Base Fortificada Na Porta De Entrada, Espaço Canitar Abre Vagas Para Atividades E Cursos No Alemão." *Portal VOZ DAS COMUNIDADES*. N.p., 05 Oct. 2015. Web. 21 Oct. 2015.

Most of the students I spoke with appeared to accept violence in their schools as inevitable and embraced NGOs like TV Verde as a viable alternative to formal education. For example, during a break at TV Verde, I spoke with a 16-year-old participant named Marcus about a shootout that had recently interrupted one of his classes. “It’s crazy,” he said. “Everyone goes to the ground. You can’t do anything.” He showed me a video on his phone that included his classmates nervously giggling every time shots from a rifle rang out nearby. He mentioned how his school drew national headlines when a student placed paper flowers in a grouping of bullet holes that pockmarked his principal’s office. He told this story, in part, to explain the resilience of his classmates and the violence they are forced to navigate just to attend school.

Marcus also drew a contrast between his positive and safe experiences at TV Verde with the threats he was exposed to while at school. Students like Marcus often found themselves going to NGOs instead of attending classes. Many of the youth with whom I spoke described NGOs as a neutral ground in the conflict between police and drug dealers. This provided a rare space for youth to critique issues relating to violence without the fear of reprisal from either police or traffickers. By the beginning of 2015, a months-long stretch of violence drove enrollment at the newly built public high school from 1300 to 600. Because of rigid federal laws governing the standardization of a school year, many students who stopped going to school were unable to enroll at other schools for nine months and were by default forced to sit out a school year (Serra 2015). Many of these students found an alternative space in the NGOs and social projects like TV Verde. Both the continuation of violence and the rigidity of formal schools encouraged students to view NGOs as a viable place for learning that was safe and

designed specifically with *favela* residents in mind. For example, a 19-year-old named Adriana who was finishing her final year of public high school spoke to Felipe and me one morning. She was heading to afternoon classes at the Complexo's high school and appeared frustrated. Felipe pointed at Adriana's shirt and joked that she was upset because she still had to wear Rio's dull public-school uniform. Dismissing Felipe's teasing, Adriana explained, "I don't gain anything from school." Felipe suggested that school would allow her to attend university to which she replied,

> I like art and photography and things that you don't need for the *vestibular* [Brazil's college entrance exam]. All that information is on the Internet. I like talking to people and having fun.... If my teacher is going to force me to do something, I ought to just get a job and have a boss. I don't really want a boss or a job. I want to make movies. Or, I want to draw and sing.

Felipe responded again by describing his university education in the arts and the opportunities it provided him. She replied, "You're the only artist I know that studied at university. Everyone else I know did social projects or just did it on their own."

I saw Adriana's complaints, rather than being an example of adolescent angst or a desire to dodge responsibility, to be based in her everyday negotiation of structural violence and the street-level violence that affected her school. Adriana also recognized the inaccessibility of opportunities for formal artistic education in the Complexo. TV Verde, instead of formal schooling, was advancing Adriana's goal of being an artist. Adriana believed that formal education limited her goal of working in the entertainment industry, and that informal education was one of the only ways that she could find work in the formal economy. She was not alone in her complaints about formal education and her desire to find alternative paths to social inclusion. In one survey, over three percent of residents surveyed in the Complexo stated

that they were participants in NGO-sponsored activities (UPP2 2013). Many youths in the community with whom I spoke described digital art and social media activism as legitimate career paths. They could provide examples of individuals in the community who achieved a form of celebrity acting as cultural representatives for the Complexo and who either ran NGOs or were former participants in digital inclusion projects. As the examples of Adriana, Jose, and Marcus imply, youth in the Complexo embraced informal education because of a lack of opportunities created by the violence in and neglect of formal education in the Complexo. TV Verde's critical digital pedagogy provided a space to learn about technology and visual representation, as well as a safe space to communicate about their experiences with oppression.

Class and the Day-to-Day of a Critical Digital Pedagogy

One morning before a workshop at TV Verde, I ran into Felipe starting a fifteen-minute trudge up the *Morro do Alemão* (German Hill). The *teleférico* was shuttered for the day because of a shootout and we were forced to walk up to TV Verde's space. Midway up the hill we stopped and smoked a cigarette. Felipe asked where I lived. I pointed to a mint green four-story structure that was visible a thousand meters across the cavernous valley that cut through the Complexo. He responded, "I'm looking for a place in the Complexo, but you know, I don't know if I want to move here. It's hard to find a cool place. I want to but if my place is ugly my friends won't come. My girlfriend won't visit." A few moments after describing the difficulties he found in the community, a police patrol marched passed. Felipe subtly gestured towards the police with his eyes. Several of the Kevlar-vested and machine-gun-toting officers made prolonged eye contact with us. Rather than criminal suspicion, the officers' gazes conveyed a sense of

anomalous curiosity. For both Felipe and I, the brief and inconsequential attention of police officers was expected. We both physically contrasted with the Complexo's racialized and classed norm. Felipe was a light-skinned Brazilian with tattoos, a crowbar mustache, and hipster clothing. As a blonde-haired, blue-eyed American, I would often hear police whisper "*gringo,*" "*Alemão*" ("German"), or "*turista*" ("tourist") when I walked near them. As we walked by the police patrol, it was clear that they saw us as different from the rest of the community.

While my personal experience with this feeling of difference suggests an ethnographic problem for foreign anthropologists in the Complexo, Felipe's experience suggests a pedagogical problem for middleclass educators. As demonstrated in our conversation, Felipe was conflicted by his inability to reconcile a relatively privileged social position with his desire to "do good" (Fischer 1997). He avoided many of the negative effects of the Complexo's segregation and poverty by maintaining a social circle and domestic space in a middleclass neighborhood that he grew up in. His privilege went beyond where he lived. Felipe attended private schools during his youth and graduated from Brazil's top film school. He did not require NGOs to supplement his formal education. At 27, he sported a professional resume that would have rivaled even the most successful artist in the Complexo. Alongside working at TV Verde, Felipe was also participating in several documentaries destined for Brazilian television and prestigious film festivals. He had contacts throughout Brazil's film industry and was a mainstay at government-sponsored cultural events.

Beyond living outside of the community, all of TV Verde's educators had a limited social life within the Complexo and had the privilege of escaping the community before shootouts erupted at night. This allowed them to avoid the experience of structural violence that defined

their students' relationship to the Complexo, popular culture, and the broader society. TV Verde's educators were also politically connected and sometimes militant supporters of Brazil's ruling Workers Party. Their employment and presence at CDI was paid for by the government and directed by political appointees.

In contrast to the educators' privileged relationship to authority, participants of the TV Verde program often expressed feelings of alienation from the world beyond the Complexo. Even though they grew up in cosmopolitan Rio de Janeiro, famous for the white sand beaches of Copacabana, many had never been to the ocean, traveled outside of the city, or, until I appeared in the community to carry out ethnographic research, met a foreigner. Many expressed a dream of going to Rio's nearby federal university but were intimidated by the highly competitive entrance exams that often required expensive preparatory courses. They realized that their success in life was contingent on subverting these isolated conditions and finding a way to connect with influential outsiders such as the middleclass educators at TV Verde.

Nonetheless, Felipe sought no artistic pretense, particularly in comparison to the more oppressive and demanding art instructors found in Brazil's formal art academies, and instead embraced a sense of cultural work outlined by Freire's critical pedagogy. Over the course of a year, I witnessed him make a clear effort to meet new people in the Complexo and suggest ways that they could collaborate as artistic equals. The day-to-day events of TV Verde were similarly devoid of an overtly classed pretense. In line with Freire's non-hierarchical method, TV Verde eschewed the honorific titles of teacher and student and instead used the terms *educador* (educator) and *os educado* (educated).There were no hierarchical relationships in

terms of evaluation and supremacy of thought. Felipe and his colleagues sought to guide the Complexo's youth towards a critical way of thinking rather than enforce a set of standardized learning goals. TV Verde's director, four educators, and six monitors shared a cramped office next to the classroom and were allowed to pass their free time working on personal projects using the NGO's tools. TV Verde's director Paulo told me, "People here have expectations. They should participate and be polite. I am not a big angry boss. It's my job to help and support these young people who have ideas but can't realize them." As Paulo suggests, there were limited responsibilities for employees and participants of TV Verde. Rather, they were expected to share in the creative and critical culture. Paulo saw himself as a leader and facilitator rather than an executive. TV Verde aspired to have a non-classed, non-hierarchical atmosphere that encouraged the creativity of the group above any single individual.

Felipe embraced his role as a cultural broker and the authority he had over influencing cultural production in the Complexo. For example, over the course of one class, Felipe spoke extensively about the history of hip-hop in the United States and how, by giving voice to a marginalized group of African American youth, it provided a template for similar artistic expression in the favela. As examples, he compared music videos from African American artists such as Biggie Smalls and Tupac with videos from Brazilian hip-hop artists such as Emicida and MV Bill. After the discussion, I had asked if he feared that TV Verde could delegitimize more *favela*-based forms of cultural production, such as music and filmmaking, by prioritizing the artistic paradigms of outsiders. Connecting his discussion of music to TV Verde's broader engagement with visual literacy in the favela, Felipe responded,

> Right now, there isn't much coming from the Complexo. It is all people coming in, filming, and leaving. These kids are young, they don't know anything, they

> don't know that there are so many movies about the Complexo. It is difficult to try and appreciate their perspective of cinema when they don't have one that is informed…. As an educator, I introduce youth to these things. They cannot form an opinion if they do not know that these films exist.

Felipe's tone suggested a judgment of the cultural and socio-economic context that prevented students from becoming cultural producers. He also insinuated that there is a way to educate individuals without imposing an authoritative sense of worth on specific cultural goods.

Felipe described how he adapted his own artistic perspectives in order to better understand the *favela* and help residents develop connections with outside artists. He was a longtime fan of American hip-hop and sought to mix the style with the types of expression found in Rio's *favelas*.

> I am using more baile funk in my songs and I am collaborating with people from the *favela* that never had a chance to do this type of work before. Years ago, I would have never done this work. It's like a white guy from America directing *Boyz n' the Hood* or trying to work with Dr. Dre. There is just too much he won't identify with and needs to learn.

Felipe demonstrated a preference for cultural goods from the global north while, at the same time, bemoaning the lack of value given to *favela*-based art. He found pedagogical value in combining Baile funk, a modern *favela*-centric genre related to Miami Bass, with a more global notion of electronic music. He also implied that he had the ability to transcend his middleclass background and engage in a broader identity politics relating to race.

I found that Felipe was not alone among middleclass educators in the Complexo who often dedicated their lives to communities that were not their own. Felipe's ability to blend classed preferences from the United States and Brazil depended on his ability to navigate both a middleclass and a *favela* sense of "taste" (Bourdieu 1984). His approach to cultural mediation was essential for TV Verde's particular brand of critical digital pedagogy. Rather than seeing his

middleclass-ness as an obstacle in his quest to enlighten *favela* youth, he prized his ability to translate cultural representations from the global north for a marginalized community in the global south. And yet, he was conscious of how his middleclass-ness interfered with his ability to relate to the community.

In the context of a problem-posing education, Felipe's sense of cultural mediation fulfilled the pedagogical requirements of Freire's cultural work. By establishing relationships with residents of the community and understanding their limitations as learners and as cultural producers, Felipe was able to develop a roadmap that encouraged socially informed digital filmmaking among youth. Even in situations where he appeared to impose his middleclass knowledge and cultural capital on a conversation, he was self-aware and critical of authority, and sought ways to disrupt it.

De-Coding Culture

After Felipe developed a cultural rapport with TV Verde's participants, he introduced them to the more mundane technical aspects of photography such as framing, exposure, sound quality, and editing. Participants spent several weeks walking around the Complexo and experimenting with a Cannon T3i Digital Single Lens Reflex (DSLR) camera. Over this period, Felipe explained the various roles of filmmaking and directed participants to focus on a specific job (cameraman, director, editor, actor, or producer) while making an effort to understand the remaining roles. Throughout this process, Felipe reminded the participants that they would be applying their experiences to a more intensive and collaborative video project.

Several times during the technical experimentation period, Felipe asked participants to break into smaller groups and choose a topic to film. During the breakdown, I walked between groups and took photos with a professional quality DSLR photography camera of my own that I

often carried with me. One student, a 19-year-old named Eduardo, saw my camera and exclaimed, “I’m going to be a professional. I use my cell phone to take photos all the time. Do you want to see? I took this one on the way.” He showed me a landscape of the Morro do Alemão with the *teleférico* station where TV Verde held workshops. Excited by the prospect of producing more professional videos, Eduardo continued to discuss my camera. “You should let me borrow your camera. I won’t break it. Otherwise, I’ll be stuck with this cellular phone…. That camera is worth more than what I will earn this year. You should bring me one from the United States. I heard they don’t cost nothing there.” I asked the 19-year-old Eduardo if he planned on going to art school to become a professional photographer or if he would attempt a career without formal education. He responded, “I need to finish high school and then I’ll work. I don’t know if it’s possible.” Eduardo expressed an understanding of the economic, social, and institutional obstacles that prevented him from achieving his goal of becoming a photographer. He recognized his technical limitations were in part connected to his inability to overcome national borders and socio-economic restraints. Nonetheless, Eduardo believed that he could become a professional photographer without formal education and through the type of experimentation afforded by TV Verde, if only he had his own professional camera.

After the experimentation period and over the following few weeks, Felipe helped students began the slow process of brainstorming their first short film. The class discussed several ideas including talking plants, jealous girlfriends, and bossy teachers, but ultimately voted to make a fictitious story about a young man from the Complexo who believed that he was being discriminated against because of his bleached-blond hair. Many of the participants described fellow classmates who were mistaken for a criminal because their bleached-blond

hair was associated with street-level drug traffickers. Throughout the video, the man with bleached-blonde hair grew paranoid and his misjudgments were played out for comedic effect. At the end of the story, he was ironically fired from his job for daydreaming. Neither Felipe nor the *educados* intended this to be a polished piece of art. Rather, Felipe encouraged the *educados* to experiment with narrative and to find a critical voice together as a team of filmmakers.

Soon after this initial video, Felipe began to brainstorm ideas for a final project with the class. Felipe suggested that the *educados* think about environmental issues in the Complexo given that TV Verde's principle sponsor had recently changed their name from *o Ministerio do Meio Ambiente* (translating as "the Environment Ministry") to *o Ministerio do Ambiente* (which also translates as "the Environment Ministry"). Providing a lesson on the intricacies of Portuguese, Felipe explained that by eliminating the term *meio* (middle, or medium) from its name, the Ministry of the Environment stressed the important of both the social and natural environment.

With this double meaning of environment in mind, Amanda, mentioned above, suggested that the project document a group of ex-convicts from the Complexo who had started a recycling business. Over the course of two weeks, while Amanda contacted the business and arranged a time to meet, the class did research about the environment in the Complexo, the recycling industry in Brazil, and a potential storyboard for the film project. Attempting to find a synergy between the participants' ideas and a positive example of a documentary film, Felipe showed clips from the film *Wasteland* (2010) about a participatory art project carried out by Vik Muniz in Rio's largest waste dump, Jardim Gamancho.

For the day of shooting, TV Verde met outside a newly built government housing complex on the outskirts of the Complexo. The participants arrived early and broke into groups based on their self-assigned responsibilities. One group fine-tuned a script that had been hastily scribbled into a notebook. Others roamed around the area and planned their camera shots. Still others prepared microphones, and even more held smartphones in their hands to act as backup cameramen. When the business owners arrived, they told everyone to crowd into a ten-by-ten-meter workshop filled with vats of used grease. The smell stuck to our skin and most of the participants preferred to wait outside on a grass-covered embankment. The crew then decided to move to the *teleférico* for a demonstration of how soap was made from recycled grease. The shooting process, from the recording of the first image to the last, took about six hours, and towards the end participants struggled to maintain interest. While seemingly mundane, Felipe believed that filming a recycling company would lead to greater social and political consciousness.

In an interview with Felipe after the video was edited and shown to the participants, I asked what he thought of the process as a whole—if he felt it was a success, and if he would duplicate the process in the future. Felipe told me, "Cultural production is important, you have to believe in it. Believing in it is half of the work. If the students do not make this first step of believing in what they are representing, they will not make any steps at all." Felipe, following the example of Freire, understood the process of learning to be as important as what was ultimately produced. Through the process, participants learned how to find images, critique them, produce a counter narrative, and collaborate artistically. They were also introduced to

alternative forms of learning that they applied to technologies to which they had increasing access.

The Politics of a Critical Pedagogy

I once asked Paulo and Felipe what their long-term plans for TV Verde were. Paulo responded in a joking tone, "I always planned to make a TV Station in the Complexo. But, we will see how the election goes." Initially, I wrote off his response as an example of Paulo's playful and informal demeanor. The idea of a TV station seemed farfetched in light of TV Verde's current scope. The reality of party politics appeared detached from the day-to-day work of the NGO. I later understood, after learning more about the NGO's institutional history, that Paulo expressed a genuine concern about the influence that Brazil's 2014 federal elections would have on the long-term viability of TV Verde's pedagogical project.

Rio's Secretary of the Environment, Carlos Minc, was the principle supporter of TV Verde, and a longtime member of Brazil's ruling Workers Party. Going back to Brazil's 1960s dictatorship, Minc's political causes were linked to environmental stewardship and economic justice. When pacification policy formalized urban space in *favelas* across Rio, Minc partnered with Petrobras to create TV Verde's precursor, the Fábrica Verde (Green Factory), a network of sustainable computer-recycling programs in four pacified *favelas*. TV Verde emerged two years later as an offshoot of Fábrica Verde. Days before I started attending TV Verde's workshops, or about a year into TV Verde's two-year mandate, Petrobras unexpectedly dropped its support of TV Verde, but not of the Fábrica Verde. TV Verde remained under the stewardship of the Ministry of the Environment but was asked by the Fábrica Verde to relocate to a room in a government-controlled *teleférico* station. The transition left TV Verde's day-to-day operations intact but made long-term institutional plans untenable.

At the end of what would likely be TV Verde's final semester, several political parties campaigned for the Complexo's tens of thousands of working-class votes. Carlos Minc hosted a campaign rally for the Workers Party at the Fábrica Verde. Paulo canceled TV Verde's workshops for the day and suggested that the participants attend the rally. He told me that because the voting age in Brazil is sixteen years old, and because voting is mandatory, he felt it was his duty to introduce the young participants of TV Verde to electoral politics. The event seemed to make sense in terms of TV Verde's intermediary role between classes: it was a political party event that brought the NGO's participants into contact with important figures and institutions from outside of the Complexo. I later pieced together that Paulo hoped to curry favor with political representatives like Carlos Minc in the off chance that he could secure future support for TV Verde.

At the campaign rally, I found the atmosphere to be akin to Brazil's famous carnival parades. There were nearly a thousand political supporters in attendance. The room was filled with ten-meter-long banners and the sound of samba drums. A few NGOs had organized musical presentations, including a youth-led violin recital and a hip-hop dance troop. The event was capped by impassioned speeches from politicians including Minc and the PT's candidate for the governorship of Rio, Lindberg Farias.

Several of TV Verde's participants brought cameras to record the event. They posted videos to their social media accounts, more as a document of their attendance than as an affirmation of political belief. Luis, mentioned above, remarked,

> This is the first time I am seeing a politician and it's a little fake. They pose and smile and you don't see anything inside of their eyes. It's all a little without soul…. I don't think they really care about us here. The residents think this is

> party and maybe they have something to win from this…. After this, I don't think I will vote for anyone. I'm going to vote null.

Luis alluded to the fact that he was compelled to vote under Brazilian law, but that he was allowed to leave his actual ballot blank. Instead of endearing the Complexo's youth to the political party that supported TV Verde, the event appeared to make them—or at least one of them—critical and wary of politics. TV Verde was in part responsible for this critique, having invited the *educados* into a politicized setting. By bringing TV Verde's cameras, the students were also encouraged to use digital technology as a tool that allowed them to approach the event as critical observers.

Several months after the campaign rally, the educators at TV Verde once again invited the *educados* into a politicized environment. Their final project was presented at a large theater in downtown Rio, along with a number of other projects associated with the Fábrica Verde. A new minister of the environment gave a speech. He mentioned several other politicians from his party who were in attendance, including the recently re-elected governor, Luiz Fernando Pezão. He also promoted the broad investments made by the government for the 2014 World Cup and the 2016 Olympics. He remarked about the films that "beyond the quality of the material produced by the students, the videos portray the daily experience of community residents." He began to tear up and his voice cracked with emotion. Audible gasps could be heard in the crowd. "I'm certain that this training is going to give a new perspective for these young people." Ending his speech, he rubbed tears from his eyes and promised continued support for the projects. He received a rapturous applause.

Many of the youth who I spoke with after the event expressed a feeling of alienation similar to what they shared at the campaign rally months earlier. After the politician's speech,

Amanda told me, “I don’t know why he was crying. I was shocked when that happened. We should have him act in our next film.”

Participation in these political events proved for naught. Promises for continued support for TV Verde were short lived. Two months later, after a shift in political allegiances at the federal and state level, TV Verde lost its mandate and was forced to shut down. While the financial support of TV Verde appeared to be unsustainable, its critical digital pedagogy demonstrated an ability to continue as an informal praxis away from the NGO. Felipe found work at a youth-oriented art project in the community, and some of the former *educados* started their own community-based film projects. Within a year, a group of TV Verde graduates had produced a number of satirical videos about life in the Complexo and had been profiled by Brazilian news sources and the BBC. Another former participant had been invited to perform with nationally recognized hip-hop groups after she produced videos that featured slam poetry of life in the Complexo. At least a dozen of the other *educados* that I met while at TV Verde continued to be regulars at activist events in the Complexo. These former *educados* demonstrate the type of praxis encouraged by a critical digital pedagogy.

The brief and complicated institutional history of TV Verde suggests that a critical digital pedagogy, the goals of student centered-learning, and the potential for social disruption can be co-opted by a dominant party politics. I found that the process of TV Verde’s inception, execution, and conclusion was typical of local *favela* NGOs that receive assistance by outsiders attempting to convert a fine. Much like I mentioned in the previous chapter concerning middleclass NGOs that operate in *favelas*, TV Verde played a role in mediating between corporations, civil society, and marginalized communities. The relationship, although

inclusionary, remains hierarchical with those offering financial support (corporations and civil society) dictating the viability of specific projects. Furthermore, as Felipe's desire to be a cultural broker or intermediary suggests, a critical digital pedagogy appears to be resistant to the complications of individual classed actors, but not to the overt interference of party politics and financial backers.

Freire himself predicted that authoritarian institutions could appropriate a critical pedagogy, apply it with bad faith, and attempt to merely soften the effects of oppression. In order to extend "generosity" towards the oppressed, as with Petrobras and the Workers Party in the form of the Fábrica Verde, Freire argues that oppressors are required to maintain their own authority and the system of domination that supports it (Freire 1971, 44). Scholars following him have also problematized the effectiveness of NGOs that operate with limited financial and institutional support (Edwards & Hulme 1996; Suleiman 2013). These studies argue that NGOs strengthen the political position of outside elites through bureaucratic clientelism but weaken the long-term effectiveness of traditional education. Similarly, bureaucratic clientelism limited TV Verde's long-term effectiveness and allowed political parties to spread their influence in the community.

As I mentioned in the previous chapter, the intermediary nature of NGOs disguises the political and corporate wrangling that results in digital inclusion projects. My observations lead me to believe that in contrast to using the sustained and critical militancy advocated for by Freire, short-term institutional projects like TV Verde aligned with the state's goal of formalization and re-envisioning the Complexo as pacified. The state appeared to be, as Bruce Fuller describes, "using education to integrate national markets, to smooth out rough edges in

cultural diversity, to build meritocratic rules for demonstrating secular achievement and getting ahead" (Fuller 2010, xvi). In other words, while educators like Felipe sought a critically informed digital pedagogy, these desires were often thwarted by the political desires of the state and its politicians. Short-lived support and susceptibility to political critique demonstrate that, at least on a practical and institutional level, a critical digital pedagogy serves a political master. Considering this, one could conclude that critical digital pedagogy can help to disguise the ambition of political parties in Brazil's marginalized communities.

It may be unfair, however, to categorize the actions of Petrobras, the PT, and Carlos Minc as the sole cause of TV Verde's political demise. Scholarly critics accused Freire of an over-theorized and idealistic method, a fact that limited critical pedagogy's spread in traditional schools (Elias 1975). Indeed, Freire's overly simplistic concepts of "revolution" and "liberation" are weakened by generalities and prescriptive language. These terms allowed right-wing critics in Brazil to demonize Freire as a hidden agent of communism. His political opponents gained clout towards the end of TV Verde's operations as Brazil's economy slipped into crisis and national political discourse shifted towards a discussion of austerity. During the same period that TV Verde promoted Freire's critical pedagogy and applied it to digital filmmaking, conservative Brazilians were taking to the street in protest of Brazil's left-leaning Workers Party by carrying banners that read "Enough with Marxist indoctrination, enough with Paulo Freire." In other words, the broader public became politically opposed to the educational and pedagogical benefits of Freire's critical pedagogy. TV Verde's political support and its promotion of a critical pedagogy became a liability in an increasingly conservative political environment.

Conclusion

This chapter provides an ethnographic example of how Freire's critical pedagogy can be applied to digital inclusion efforts in Brazilian *favelas*. Much like Freire's problem-posing approach, digital inclusion projects promote non-hierarchical forms of education and alternative strategies of cultural production. They are also inspired by trends in Brazilian cinema that (both successfully and unsuccessfully) try to center marginalized perspectives of and from within the *favela*. TV Verde's pedagogical goals are shared with other digital inclusion projects in the Complexo that seek to disrupt classed systems of knowing. Participatory filmmaking helps to develop a visual literacy and provides one path to adapting critical digital pedagogy to unique forms of technology. Even with their novice technical capabilities, TV Verde's former participants learned to use digital technology as a means to present critical ideas and challenge alienated representations of marginalized communities. Ethnographic observation of TV Verde also revealed the very practical and non-technological limitations of critical digital pedagogy. This form of pedagogy, when filtered through local-level NGOs, can be co-opted by the very political process it seeks to challenge. The sustained praxis that emerges from critical digital pedagogy, as is evident from the cultural production that took place after TV Verde closed, allows marginalized communities to confront oppression while also facilitating systems of political patronage. In this sense, TV Verde's critical digital pedagogy demonstrates the political nature of knowledge in the information age, and the contradictory nature of inclusion in marginalized communities.

Chapter Five
Favela Flâneurs: Censorship and Street Photography in Brazil's Shantytowns

In previous chapters I discuss how digital inclusion programs promote a new sense of citizenship in pacified favelas: former drug traffickers become Microsoft spokesmen, the *favela*'s working-class gains access to middleclass consumerism, and local youth learn to critically represent their world through digital filmmaking. In this chapter, I borrow from Walter Benjamin's (1999) discussion of the *flâneur* to describe how street photographers from the favela challenged a local practice of censorship called the *lei do silêncio* (law of silence). Benjamin's description of the 19th century Parisian flaneur, a literary figure noted for idle observations of street-life, symbolized the worldviews created by a modernist city. Similarly, I argue that a group of street photographers whom I call *favela flâneurs* provides one of the clearest examples of how digital inclusion and pacification shaped ideas of public space on Rio's urban margins.

I ask how digital images disrupt historic forms of censorship in marginalized communities and consider how street photographers symbolize the emergent critical perspectives of a network society. These questions help track the *favela flâneur*'s history, from censorship enacted by drug traffickers, to the street photographer's formal emergence under pacification, to renewed forms of censorship under the police. The 2001 death of Tim Lopes, a journalist who filmed the sale of drugs in the Complexo, provides one of the more dramatic examples of violent censorship in the Complexo. The violent censorship of Tim Lopes contrasted with how a group of street-photographers visually documented their community after it was pacified. These same photographers, although supported by Brazil's political and corporate elite, became the subjects of a federal police investigation named *Operação Firewall*

(Operation Firewall) that many in the Complexo believed to be the political censorship of anti-violence activists. This Complexo's case demonstrates how the flaneur negotiates censorship while documenting a modern urban aesthetic.

Lei do Silêncio

During my time in the Complexo, I lived on top of an NGO called the Oca dos Curumins. The building was four stories tall and, as a hobby, I often spent evenings photographing the ten-kilometer-long vistas around the building's courtyard. One evening after a group of residents were leaving a late-night meeting at the Oca, a neighbor named Jhony stumbled into the building's courtyard. While I lived across the alleyway from him, I had spoken with the 67-year-old Jhony in passing on an almost daily basis. He invited me to share beer with him and he sometimes mentioned how he knew people in the community. Another neighbor later told me that he played the local *jogo do bicho* (numbers game) and sometimes drank with and bought cocaine from street-level dealers. Neighbors often laughed off Jhony's boozing as a quirk rather than a vice. When Jhony entered the Oca that night, I treated him like many other neighbors and offered him a cup of coffee. He declined the coffee and asked for one of my cigarettes. After I lit his cigarette, he peered at me with indignation and said, "Reporters die in the Complexo." He then traced an invisible line with his finger at his wrist, then his elbows and shoulders. He croaked while exhaling his cigarette, smoke pillaring out of his mouth, and then drew a final line across his neck. He tugged on an imaginary camera strap around his neck and then tugged on the real camera strap around my neck. I stood speechless not in fear but rather baffled as to how I could explain the banality of my research and my photography.

The founder of the Oca, Tia Bete, heard my conversation with Jhony from inside of her office and stepped into the courtyard. She saw my discomfort, scolded Jhony for making me

feel uncomfortable, and told him to go home to sleep. Once Jhony left, Bete assured me that the Oca was *sem politica* (without politics) and therefore a space where I could photograph without worry. Bete then took a joking tone and tugged on my camera strap just like Jhony, "In the *favela*, your camera is not a toy. People take it seriously. Take care with your camera." Bete implied, in jest and while guaranteeing my safety, that a camera should be used with cautious intention in the Complexo. My conversation with Jhony and Bete revealed the complicated limits associated with expression and visual representation in the *favela*. In their own ways, the two communicated that the visual documentation of *favela* street life was subject to the threat of violence.

Favela residents used many terms to describe street-level censorship: the *lei do silêncio* (law of silence), the *lei do morro* (law of the hill), and the *lei do traffic* (traffickers law) (Sheriff 2002; Goldstein 2003; Silva e Leite 2007). As a student of the *favela*, I was aware of traffickers violently suppressing those who spoke about crimes committed in the name of the drug trade (Arias and Rodriguez 2007). With the *lei do silêncio* in mind, I was not surprised by Tia Bete's or Jhony's reaction to my camera. I had met *favela* residents who discussed the drug trade with the police or journalists, and who had been expelled from the community, tortured, and killed.

One of the more violent manifestations of the law of silence that I witnessed during my research involved a neighborhood association president named Osmar who represented the community of Nova Holanda in the sprawling *favela* complex of Maré. I was introduced to Osmar by another foreign researcher the same day that the military pacified Maré. That day, Osmar spoke with me for a minute on a street near his home as two police helicopters forcefully fluttered and swooped fifty meters overhead. He had just spoken with a police

commander who told him about arrests and the confiscation of illicit materials that resulted from house-to-house searches. A few months later I ran into Osmar again at a community center where the army general in charge of Maré's pacification police held an open forum. Osmar took to a microphone and asked about overly aggressive searches carried out by the police at the entrance of the community. As a retired police sergeant, he was cautiously optimistic about the possibilities of a security policy that could destabilize imperialistic drug gangs and draw development projects to the area. Osmar was also wary of pacification, knowing that previous programs that had promised similar changes had failed. He was known to speak with government officials, journalists, and academic researchers, and worked closely with highly public anti-violence activists as a means to open up his community. Unfortunately, Osmar's desire to communicate basic information about his community with a wide range of outsiders was a definite violation of the *lei do morro*. Soon after I had spoken with him the second time, Osmar was gunned down by traffickers inside of his community association as a group of horrified residents waiting to speak with their neighborhood association president looked on. The message was clear: drug traffickers would continue to enforce the law of silence despite the police's promises of protection or the nuanced reasoning of local democratic leaders.

The threat of violence was only one reason for locals to remain silent about criminal activity in the *favela*. Historically, Brazil's democratic institutions were unresponsive to the needs of working class victims of drug violence (Da Silva 2007, 571). Rather than being complicit or fearful of the drug trade, residents tacitly exchanged silence for local-level protection against police abuse, threats from non-local drug gangs, and other forms of socio-economic violence

(Leeds 1996). *Favela* residents invoke silence in a discursive reaction to broader forms of structural violence—an imperfect means of self-empowerment in light of widespread oppression and exclusion (Caldeira & Holston 1999, Goldstein 2003, Silva & Leite 2007, Penglase 2009). In general, the *favela* residents that I spoke with believed that silence was a safer reaction to drug violence than vocal critique of the police or traffickers.

As my interaction with Jhony and Tia Bete suggests, the *lei do silêncio* also extends beyond words and applies to the production of images. Images, as much as words, can spread information about elicit activity in the *favela*, compromise the drug trade, and shed light on police abuse. Images can also be shared and used to unite a community around a common visual politics that opposes oppressive authority such as drug factions or police. And by documenting and providing more than words, images provide more "authentic" and visceral representations that communicate the everyday and street-level conditions of violence.

Nonetheless, the warnings that I received about my camera from Jhony and Tia Bete clashed with a broader aesthetic and political movement that I witnessed online and on the streets of the Complexo. As an ethnographer, my standard field kit included a bulky camera bag filled with a digital single reflex camera, two lenses, and a notebook. My camera bag was instantly recognizable by most amateur photographers and, as a result, I met dozens of youth from the *favela* who learned about photography through digital inclusion NGOs. These young photographers, most in their teens and early twenties, documented everyday street-life, including the violence that consumed the community. As their street-level images spread online and affected individuals within and beyond the Complexo, these young photographers became increasingly important representatives of the community. Their images, rather than their

words, became a principle means by which residents challenged the paradigm of silence organized around violence.

In a scholarly sense, I came to see these *favela*-based image-makers as reflecting the qualities of Walter Benjamin's (1999) nineteenth-century Arcadian *flâneur*. Inspired by the poetry of Charles Baudelaire, Benjamin's *flâneur* was an antithetical and idle product of class divisions during the industrial revolution and a uniquely bourgeois actor of a rapidly urbanizing Paris. Benjamin's *flâneur* was an urban stroller, often anonymous, sometimes aimless, and inspired by the everyday happenings of modern city life. The *flâneur* observed the empty hours of the day, not as a gawker but as an invested observer; the city was an object of study to be revealed and made public. While Benjamin intended his description of this individual as a romantic representation of the modern city, scholars have adapted his work to describe the conditions of urban modernity (Taithe 2002). Benjamin described the apolitical social mechanisms of modernity, how they inspired an aesthetic sensibility, and what effect this new aesthetic had in shaping contemporary worldviews (Jennings 2006). In this sense, the *flâneur* was important not only for the modernity that he represented, but also for his observations and the way that he could influence public opinion.

I find that Benjamin's *flâneur* offers a potent allegory for the changes taking place in the Complexo. Similar to Benjamin's *flâneur*, the *favela flâneur* is the product of new class dynamics. In particular, the *favela flâneur* emerges as part of the millions of Brazilians who joined the New Middle Class by leaving extreme poverty and joining the global consumer class. Building on Benjamin's scholarship, I believe the Complexo's *flâneurs* can offer insight into how

conditions witnessed in nineteenth-century Paris are being reproduced and mirrored in the twenty-first century by digital activists living under Brazil's oppressive State.

Image technology plays a significant role in the *flâneur*'s effort to record an urban aesthetic. The industrialized daguerreotype process, the photographic method most often associated with the *flâneur*, was a revolutionary technology for nineteenth-century Europe, not unlike the smartphone in Brazil during the time of my research. The daguerreotype was an essential tool of the flâneur and allowed him to mass-produce street-level scenes (Howie 2010). The daguerreotype, like the smartphone, transformed the modern eye and helped the *flâneur* to reimagine the notion of seeing the world (Sontag 2002). However, the *flâneur*, although reflecting the broader democratization of urban space, was also shaped by the new technocratic controls of the street due to modern advancements such as cars and restrictive city planning (Benjamin 1999, 435). In this sense, the *flâneur* is inherently tied to the modern city and the machines that help to define its daily experiences.

Much like the Arcadian *flâneur*, several practical and technological conditions allowed the *favela flâneur* to flourish under pacification. As Rio's most impoverished *favela*, access to and the cost of audiovisual equipment for residents of the Complexo had been prohibitive in the decades before my research. The growing affordability and ubiquity of digital image-making devices (cellphones, smartphones, and cameras ranging from consumer to professional) allowed *favela* residents to participate in the visual documentation of everyday life (see chapter three). Digital devices were smaller, more portable, and ultimately easier to use than previous image-making technologies, requiring little expertise to use proficiently. The social and economic dimensions of pacification also made technology more accessible; residents had

more access to credit and therefore more access to camera equipment. The occupational opportunities for *favela* residents were being strategically reshaped through the growth of digital inclusion NGOs. Pacification police also claimed a large swath of *favela* territory around schools, main roads, hospitals, NGOs, and the newly built *teleférico* system, and they encouraged community members to use these spaces. In this sense, pacification brought a sense of modernity to the *favela* not unlike the industrial revolution did for the ninetieth-century Paris discussed by Benjamin.

Like Benjamin's *flâneur*, the *favela* image-makers that I met experienced the modernizing effects of pacification in diverse ways. Benjamin's *flâneur* is identified in terms of a fluid and aesthetic sensibility that is both politically and morally neutral (Gluck 2003). While the *flâneur* could be an agent of political change and revolution, he could also be symbolically appropriated by a dominant institution. By becoming a fixture of street life, the *flâneur* transforms from a mere observer to a symbol of the modern city—a human billboard that embodies a commodified and alienated urban environment. Benjamin describes the commodified *flâneur* as a "sandwichman," or "the man who feels himself viewed by all and sundry as a true suspect and, on the other side, the man who is utterly undiscoverable, the hidden man" (Benjamin 1999, 420; D'souza & McDonough 1986). Benjamin also describes the salaried *flâneur*, reflective of professional journalists, who advertises the state rather than a specific commodity (Buck Morss 1986). According to Susan Buck-Morss (1991, 306), "[p]osing as a reporter of the true conditions of urban life, [the *flâneur*] in fact diverts his audience from its tedium." By aligning with influential institutions, the flanuer can transcend traditional forms of knowing while also becoming agents of authority.

Scholars have since built on Benjamin's idea by assigning the qualities of street-level observation and political critique beyond a limited group of urban, middleclass, and European men. As Janet Wolff (1985) notes, women are often "invisible *flâneurs*" who participate in the democratization of public space, but whose observations remain marginalized, censored, and misrepresented. For Elizabeth Wilson (2002), prostitutes, a demoralized and invisible female underclass—and not sandwichmen—represent the pinnacle of a modern *flâneur*. Both Wolff and Wilson imply that a full spectrum of street-level identities and subject positions should be included in how we view the democratization of urban space and the dissemination of everyday perspectives. In this respect, the *favela flâneur* is defined not by race, gender, or even class, but rather by participation in the urban aesthetic.

The Complexo's *flâneurs* converted images into a form of social, cultural, and political capital that had not been previously known to the *favela*. Much like Benjamin's *flâneur*, the *favela flâneur* produced broader cultural texts that were shared through print and social networks. I observed numerous digital inclusion programs in pacified *favelas* that used *favela* photographers as symbols, or sandwichmen, for pacification's inclusionary potential. Countless news articles profiled *favela flâneurs* and discussed their association with platforms like Twitter and Facebook. *Favela* image-makers received sponsorships from and became spokesman for multinational corporations and international media organizations. Some photographers in the Complexo were recruited by political parties to be local campaign agents. Being a *favela flâneur* required no set political stance. There were individuals who both opposed and supported the police.

John Collins (2015) shows that in Brazilian world heritage sites, being a symbol of cultural appropriation, while unsavory, is often justified as a means of symbolic self-defense against a violent social environment. As I saw in the Complexo, having one's work appropriated by a dominant organization was most importantly a means to gain cultural capital and participate in a cosmopolitan discourse about rights, responsibilities, and the place of the *favela* in Brazil's larger society. The opportunity to benefit from street photography was a revelation for a community that had, for much of its existence, been socially, culturally, and economically prohibited from speaking about the goings-on within its boundaries.

The *favela flâneur* has been integral to the experience of pacified citizenship in the Complexo and has affected the way in which the community perceived its own socio-political context post-pacification. While challenging the basic prohibition against photography implied by the *lei do silêncio*, image-makers continued to avoid critiquing the drug gangs. Historically, traffickers shared a communal space with residents, an unavoidable intimacy, whereas police were seen as outsiders or interlopers. With the increased presence of police, *favela* residents intensified a critique of the police operations that disrupted their daily lives (Silva & Leite 2007). The police had recently become the community's most violent state actors and represented a rule of law that also permitted street photography and the documentation of their activities. By focusing their cameras on the police, image-makers were allowed to skirt trafficker censorship while still critiquing the general atmosphere of violence provoked by drug gangs.

Tim Lopes and Silence

No other individual better represents the threats and historic limits of *favela* images-makers than Tim Lopes. Lopes was an award-winning journalist who worked for Brazil's largest and most influential network O Globo. During the 1990s and early 2000s, Lopes was famous for his

reporting about Brazil's urban working class. In Brazil's broader journalistic community, he is most well known for the use of hidden cameras to record street-level crime. For many young activists in the Complexo, Lopes also provided a cautionary tale of journalistic overstep, a violation of the *lei do morro*, and the harsh realities of making the *favela*'s daily violence more visible.

During his life, Lopes represented a paradigm shift in terms of who reported on the *favela*, what themes were discussed, and how stories were produced. He grew up a short drive from the Complexo in the Mangueira *favela*. Early in his career, he documented the growing population of street children that occupied downtown Rio during the 1980s and '90s. In one noteworthy report, Lopes tracked a thief on a crowded street. The thief plunged a knife into the shoulder of a pedestrian while an accomplice waited nearby. A taxi driver approached with a gun drawn. The thieves ran across the avenue and one was killed by a speeding bus. With displays of violence such as those in the video, Lopes ushered in a new moment of sensationalist news-making in Brazil. He also brought more intimate depictions of poverty, violence, and prejudice into middle and upper class Brazilian living rooms. Many of his viewers from the *favela*, who also became his informants, saw themselves and their community's struggles in Lopes' reporting.

Lopes' most celebrated piece aired in 2001. Filmed with hidden cameras, the news report showed the sale of marijuana and cocaine in the section of Complexo known as Grota: a long, winding, and crowded thoroughfare that cuts through a cavernous valley in the middle of the community. In the three-minute piece titled *Feirão de Drogas* (*The Big Drug Fair*), Lopes secretly recorded a dozen young men with automatic weapons yelling out the price and

quantity of their product. The dealers were nonchalant about the selling of drugs in a public space. The images depicted an element of everyday life in the Complexo but were shocking to see on Brazil's national television.

There were several reactions to Lopes' *Big Drug Fair*. Many of O Globo's viewers believed that the video proved that Rio's drug culture was out of control. Police reacted by invading Grota and shutting down drug sales for a few months. Lopes' piece became the first television report to win an Esso award, the Brazilian equivalent of the Pulitzer Prize for journalistic excellence. Some *favela* residents, disillusioned by the ineffectiveness of police and politicians in controlling the traffickers' parallel state, began contacting Lopes directly and reporting street-level crimes that took place in their community.

A year after the *Feirão* aired, Lopes received a tip that child prostitution was taking place at a trafficker-organized Baile Funk open-air party in a *favela* near the Complexo. At the baile, a young *olheiro* (lookout) noticed a red light from Lopes' hidden camera. Two armed traffickers approached; Lopes confessed to being a journalist and was kidnapped. On a forested hilltop overlooking the community, one that I could see from my bedroom window in the Oca, twenty traffickers took part in a mock trial. They used a katana blade to cut off Lopes' hands and feet and then his arms and legs. Still alive, he was placed inside a stack of used tires and set ablaze. The method of execution, known as *microondas* (microwave), was popularized during the 1990s and epitomized the theatrical forms of violence carried out by drug gangs during the period.

The news of Lopes' kidnapping spread quickly. The police sent in a force of one hundred *Bope* (special forces), rounded up known traffickers, and planted a Brazilian flag at the highest

point of the Complexo. Nearby, a local informant tipped off the police to the location of Lopes' execution. But, instead of Lopes' physical remains, investigators found the remains of others who had also been executed by *microondas*. Police complained that the subsequent investigation was hindered by *favela* residents who were increasingly apprehensive to speak about the drug trade. Several traffickers admitted to taking part in Lopes' execution and, a few days after that, there was a nationally televised memorial attended in person by thousands.

Despite the state theater that took place after Lopes' death, the drug faction returned to power and continued to enforce the *lei do morro*. Emblematic of pre-pacification policing strategies, police left the Complexo after a month and were replaced by twenty lightly equipped patrolmen. International observers carried out investigations and the police released a detailed 658-page report. The traffickers who admitted to killing Lopes were sentenced to decades in prison only to be freed on work release three years later. One returned to the Complexo to sell drugs and managed to shoot down a police helicopter. He was caught years later, when the community was pacified.

The politics of memory surrounding Lopes' death creates a methodological and theoretical opportunity to visualize the mechanics of authoritative silence in the Complexo. His death assigned a collective and public memory that helped to solidify the official discourses of the Complexo (Gillis 1994; Foote 1997). In the Brazilian media, Lopes strengthened the symbolic role of investigative reporters and legitimized the role of journalists as the producers of truth in the *favela* (Castilho 2005). His death served as a painful memory of censorship and the necessity of a critical media made of and for the periphery.

Critics claim that Lopes' posthumous "mystification" ignores his role in normalizing the creation of the modern-day *favela* "other" (Mortzsohn 2002). The widespread media coverage of his death solidified the Complexo as a no-man's land isolated from the rest of the city. While Lopes was influential in bringing cameras into the *favela* for documentary purposes, he often failed to include *favela* voices in his commentary. Rather, he encouraged corporate media to depict the *favela* through the lens of drug conflict, traffickers, and police.

I walked past the location where Lopes shot the *Feirão das Drogas* almost daily. The Grota was a clear vestige of what Tim Lopes documented ten years earlier. A beautifully preserved red striped Volkswagen Kombi that could be prominently seen in Lopes' video remained parked as it was ten years earlier. The area bustled with foot traffic, old friends talked, and sharply dressed families went on their way to church. Youth sat on curbs and listened to music. Old men drank *cachaça*. The site was also one of the most active sites for police-trafficker conflict. The *boca* (drug distribution point) that Lopes filmed still operated in the evenings. Young men silently paced on the sidewalk, bags of white powder in their open palms and handguns tucked into their waistbands. The young men disappeared into alleyways when police patrols passed. Officers cautiously pointed their rifles towards rooftops and down darkened dead-ends with their lines of sight sporadically obstructed by pedestrians. Once, while leaving an ice cream parlor in front of the *boca*, I walked by a police officer as he randomly shot his rifle up an alleyway. People took cover behind plastic chairs with the fire engine red logo for the ice cream company Kibon stenciled on. One resident took the opportunity to order an ice cream cone. Those that were still outside paused momentarily and, seeing a relatively calm police officer put down his gun, continued on their way. The officer

walked away with a daft grin directed at the rest of his patrol. As this event suggests, a space that was essential to Lopes' highly publicized death appeared to be unchanged by the insertion of police, and violence remained a defining feature of street life in the Complexo.

My ethnographic experience with the public memory of Lopes reinforced my understanding that a *lei do silêncio* was engrained in the fabric of the Complexo's street-level culture. Documentaries and news pieces about Lopes continued to be broadcast on national television when I was in the Complexo ten years after his death. While none of the informants who I spoke with could remember the exact day Lopes was killed, several remembered his death and described to me the pillars of black smoke that often drifted over the community after the drug gang burned a victim. A public high school on the outskirts of the Complexo was named *Jornalista Tim Lopes* (Journalist Tim Lopes). The site of Lopes' execution could be seen from the school.

Ethnographers have noted that death makes social meaning and shapes the underlying philosophies of a community. Charles Piot notes that "death is a moment when important social work is accomplished…. Death is an occasion for knowledge and study…" (Piot 2010, 108). At the policy level, Lopes' death inspired a discussion concerning a permanent police presence in the Complexo that, after ten years, would lead to the community's pacification. Pacification police promised to challenge censorship in the community and, following motifs seen in popular culture and anthropology, described traffickers as symbols of the past that could not co-exist within a pacified Complexo (Fabian 1983).[24] This description was problematically short

[24] Fabian, Johannes. (1983). *Time and the other: How Anthropology makes its object*. New York: Columbia University Press

sighted, as my experience on Grota suggested. Under the supposedly democratizing effects of pacification, the threat of violent censorship remained.

Voz das Comunidades

Though the death of Tim Lopes provides a poignant example of the *lei do silêncio*, I met several groups responding to the sense of transformation and digital disruption that took place after pacification. No other group of individuals represented the *favela flâneur* better than the editors of the Complexo's local paper, *Voz das Communidades* (*Voice of the Communities*). *Voz*'s founder, Rene Silva, started the paper in 2006 when he was twelve years old or, rather, four years before the Complexo was pacified. The paper was paid for by a government funded NGO, produced at Silva's middle school, and distributed to at most a hundred families in his community once every several months. At the time, there were several news articles that presented Rene as a symbol of journalistic hope in a community long plagued by censorship.

The recognition that *Voz das Comunidades* initially received from Brazil's corporate media paled in comparison to its eventual online presence. When the Complexo was pacified in 2010, a then 17-year-old Rene sat at a desktop computer and tweeted about troop movements. When he woke up the day of pacification, his twitter account had 700 followers and *Voz da Communidade*'s had 180. The following morning these numbers grew to 15,000 and 30,000 respectively. Within a year *Voz* had corporate and governmental sponsorship, received support from the U.S. mission in Brazil, and made dozens of partnerships with universities and NGOs throughout the world.

I once joked to an American journalist who visited the Complexo that he could find more copies of last month's *Voz da Communidade* in the community than the combined run of *O Globo*'s last month of print dailies. With this joke, I implied that *Voz da Comunidade* was not

only more popular among Complexo residents but also made a better effort to circulate both physical prints and their digital reproductions around the community. Rene considered *Voz* a living archive of events in the community with thousands of articles, videos, and photos documenting the events before and after pacification. Even when *Voz*'s online and offline content engaged national news themes, such as the lowering of the age of majority for drug crimes or funding to federal development projects, their discussion was community-oriented. For example, one headline for a story that discussed federal funding for urban utilities read "*Uma rua inteira sem luz no Morro de Adeus*" ["An entire path without light on Goodbye Hill"](Barbosa 2016). They invited community activists and citizen journalists from throughout Brazil to write columns about common issues shared by the country's millions of *favela* residents.

Voz provided a direct counter-narrative to elite media companies by presenting news content imagined for and produced by locals. The paper provided no overt political perspective and shied away from direct critique of policymakers or police commanders. Rather, they critiqued specific policies such as pacification itself, and applauded local residents who resisted victimization by taking part in political activism and democratic discourse. *Voz*'s website kept a running count of the year's deaths and injuries caused by violence; one column listed the deaths of *moradores* (residents) and another listed those of *policiais* (police). These journalistic features positioned *Voz* as a central part of the Complexo's civil society and demonstrated how images can encourage dialogue and play a central part in the development of civil society.

Like Benjamin's *flâneur*, journalists associated with *Voz* could often be found walking around the community, talking to residents and taking photos. They also had a prolific online

presence, often posting images and reposting messages from neighbors while sharing their content with tens of thousands of followers. They developed their brand through engagement in the community.

Rene Silva and his childhood friend Betinho Casa Nova were the most visible *flâneurs* in the community. Much like the *flâneur* of nineteenth-century Paris, Rene and Betinho had accumulated cultural capital and a cosmopolitan identity by walking the streets of their community. Once, while speaking to them at a bar, I asked about the international nature of their work; specifically, I was interested in the various NGOs, corporations, and media actors that had sponsored them for over ten years. Betinho responded, "The first photo I ever published was in the *New York Times*. It was the mother of a victim of police violence attached to a story about violence in the community." He pulled up the image on his phone and continued speaking.

> To come from here and then arrive outside of Brazil. It's a hell of a fight [*uma puta luta*] for the right to show this place to the world. There are still a lot of things that are anti-*favela*…. The media is still really absent. The vast majority of the abuses and violations and terror that takes place every day become a little sentence in a larger article. They don't seem to care what goes on here. How we are different.... Today there is a debate about public security, but we rarely are included in that debate. There is the issue of gentrification, removals, the drug war. No one cares about our view besides that one little line in the article (Interview December 2015).

In this conversation, Betinho suggested that his narrative is often misrepresented and appropriated by outside actors who claim to be sympathetic to *favela*-based causes. His *luta* (fight) for recognition was a perpetual conflict with processes that marginalized his perspective and used his images out of context. Betinho relied on social media to subvert political

appropriation but acknowledged that his images could often be obscured by the complexity of the Complexo's activist narrative.

I frequently saw Rene and Betinho at bars and shops around the community. One afternoon late into my research, I met them at a gas station *por kilo* (by-the-kilogram) buffet restaurant on the outskirts of the Complexo, right across from the headquarters for the broader pacification police force that operated in more than forty *favelas* throughout Rio. Rene and Betinho discussed the new mobile app *Fogo Cruzado,* which had just been launched by Amnesty International earlier in the day. They received a video that showed a group of 10-year-old children huddled on the floor of a *teleférico* car. The children looked alert but unafraid as gunfire popped below them. Betinho, frustrated, started to complain about pacification policy and the reception of their images. He blamed the police for ignoring these images. I asked how they saw themselves in relationship to pacification policy. Betinho responded,

> Democratization in the *favela* is fundamental for pacification, the image is essential to expression, communication. Images are democratic communication. Unfortunately, violence generates visibility…. There are a lot of competing stories, they want our visibility. For them to use our images is no problem for them. Sometimes, people get a trip to some foreign country and they forget about their responsibilities to communicate for the community [they are visiting]. These foreigners just want to use our images for their own visibility. After the war started again, they stopped coming to the community. I've come to see media as helping, not the press, not those who have media projects—the technology itself helps (Interview December 2015).

In this conversation, Betinho alludes to several issues relating to street-level journalistic narratives, the value of the *favela* image-maker, and the possibility of democratic change in a pacified *favela*. Several of the central tensions in the work of the *favela flâneur* are how they are perceived by the outside world, how their work is used, and what type of credit they receive for their work. Among *Voz*'s frequent collaborators, I often spoke with a local activist

named Mauricio. He was a local photographer with a souvenir stand he built at the end of the *teleférico* line. With a stand immediately outside of the last station, where tourists descended to take photos, he had received visitors almost daily and acted as an unofficial spokesman for the *teleférico*. I once introduced him to a friend who worked for a prestigious North American newspaper. Mauricio guided us around the *teleférico* while the journalist spoke with businesses around the station. Mauricio told me, "Foreign journalists are better than Brazilians. Gringos come talk to us." Mauricio told me how Brazil's most watched news shows, such as *Cidade Alerta* and the *Jornal Nacional*, had used his Internet posts but blurred his name. After following Mauricio for over two years on Facebook, it appeared to me that his posts were shared, liked, and commented on even more than the corporate news stories that discussed the same content. Foreign journalists usually visited him repeatedly over long periods of time to see how his business was going and what his take was on recent newsworthy events in the Complexo.

While we sat in his home and the headquarters of *Voz das Comunidades*, Rene shared a similar method of negotiating the tenuous form of cosmopolitan capital that residents of the Complexo gained by working with outside journalists and activists. We watched marketing videos by Rene that had been professionally produced by foreign NGOs. Rene described his interaction with outside journalists: "The community gets a lot of things that come from abroad. Foreigners always have less fear than Brazilians, and they have a greater ability to communicate the truth." Rene saw his work with influential outsiders as being many things—an honor, an annoyance, an obligation, and a vanity. His ability to report on and curate everyday happenings in the Complexo was a responsibility and a privilege that elevated his cultural

capital in the community. Nonetheless, he placed himself at the vanguard against state abuse and in continuous danger by reporting on violence in the community.

Fotoclub Alemão

The *favela flâneur* was already a fixture of street-life by the time that I arrived in the Complexo. Beyond the more notable examples of the *flâneur,* such as Rene and Betinho who received direct funding from international organizations, I also followed a collective of photographers called *o Fotoclub Alemão* (the Alemão Photo Club). They were mostly youth aged 15 to 25 years old. Almost all were former participants of government-sponsored digital inclusion programs installed in the Complexo after pacification. Most of the *fotoclub*'s participants were local journalists, artists, and activists.

These *favela*-based photographers reflected the modern-day *flâneur*, strolling through the *favela* armed with a camera as their eye, recognizable but often ominous. The young women and men who took part in *favela* image-making were enamored with recording modern life. The Complexo's everyday happenings involved shootouts, images of shootouts, talk of shootouts, and the sharing of shootouts as an element of digital media. While the *favela flâneur* has benefited from the democratic goals of pacification, they were often limited by the physical landscape of Rio's urban periphery: tight knit alleyways, crowded sidewalks crammed with stalls, and narrow streets roaring with motorcycles and Kombis. They furiously shot the scenes around them: crumbling concrete step, a hand-painted mural devoted to Brazil's national team, billboards advertising "*flashback baile funk,*" garbage, and stray cats. These images were banal and everyday, invoking a form of *saudade* (nostalgia) for a sometimes idealized past and an appreciation for street-level aesthetic.

I walked around the community with them on four occasions. I had a camera with me as well and followed along, playing the "ethnographic *flâneur*" by documenting their street-level and everyday interactions with the community (Goffman 1959). I was the *flâneur's flâneur*; I took nonchalant pictures of photographers taking pictures of themselves and their community. My goal was to document the photographers' intentions and observe how they negotiate the street-level production of *favela* imagery.

At the beginning of one walk around, I met a group of eight participants at an eerily silent *teleférico* station on an early winter afternoon. Officially, the *teleférico* was closed due to a two-week period of shootouts between police and drug traffickers. Unofficially, residents believed that the system's corporate operators had absconded with the funds given to them by the government to pay employee salaries and maintenance costs. Even with a sign that stated the *teleférico* was closed due to violence until further notice, the station provided the *fotoclub* with a safe and highly public place to produce imagery.

When I arrived, the group was taking photos of a group of children that used the derelict *teleférico* as a jungle gym. A participant that I had met before named Fernando spotted me as I approached the *teleférico*. He walked up to me and asked for cigarette. Lighting his cigarette, he took out his smartphone and showed me a video that he had recorded. "This is my patio. I'm low to protect myself…. Listen." Muffled cracks and wizzes projected from his smartphone's speaker. "You can't see it here, but I swear I could feel the bullets." Fernando was a twenty-something, churchgoing professional studio photographer and had just married; he planned to have children. I asked if he planned to stay in the community after such a violent event.

> A few years ago maybe I wanted to leave. The economy isn't good. For my family I would leave. This video is proof that a *bala perdida* (stray bullet) could hit my wife as well. I don't know why. But we both want to stay. As I get older, I realize that you shouldn't abandon your home just because it's bad.

He implied that he was finding a courage to change the community. As an example of this newfound sense of responsibility, he mentioned the video on his smartphone. He shared the video with his friends, who were well-known activists from the Complexo. Subsequently, they shared the video on their social media accounts. O Globo showed the video on their nightly news during a segment about increased violence in the Complexo. Fernando was not motivated by notoriety for his images; indeed, the segment only cited an anonymously titled "Facebook" and did not even name the account that shared his content. Rather, Fernando appeared inspired that his perspective could be seen as authentic and valued by a broader journalistic audience.

After meeting up, the *fotoclub* walked towards a hill behind the abandoned *teleférico* station where a two-meter-tall crucifix had been erected in a low tropical bush. The cross marked the spot where Tim Lopes was assassinated. The dozen or so photographers let their cameras hang around their necks and remained silent as they continued to shuffle down a well-worn dirt path. I asked Bruno, the de facto leader and organizer of the *fotoclub*, if we could take pictures and he told me that the place was *chato* (boring) and that we were heading to a more interesting location. Fernando also told me that there were *caras* (guys) that would not want us taking pictures. By using the ambiguous descriptor *caras*, he implied that there were traffickers nearby. The memory of Lopes' death, although marked by a two-meter-tall iron cross, was still affected by the *lei do silêncio*.

Nonetheless, just by walking around the community with cameras, the group challenged the *lei do silêncio*. We moved on the *teleférico* and walked through a narrow *beco* (alleyway). On several occasions, someone in the group told me to sling my camera behind my back. Or, they put a hand in the air to send a signal of caution to the group. Seeing that I was taking pictures at a nonchalant corner hundreds of meters down one of the Complexo's longest alleyway, Fernando ran up to me and whispered, "There are guys [*caras*] usually over here that don't like to be photographed." He referred to local drug traffickers who feared their identities would be revealed online and in turn made available to police.

Soon after indicating that there were drug dealers nearby the site of Lopes' death, Bruno told me to be on guard with my camera as a police patrol marched by. Bruno nodded and smiled and said hello. Participants of the *fotoclub* nervously stood aside to let the police walk past. Bruno hung his camera at his waist and tried to nonchalantly steal a photo, tripping his camera's shutter without making eye contact with the police—who were known to demand to see cameras and phones in order to erase pictures so they, like the drug dealers, would not be identified online. Over the years, Bruno had several photos of police published in major Brazilian and international papers. He told me at the end of the day, "we have to show people from the outside what it's like to have police in your neighborhood with rifles."

The point of the *fotoclub* was explicit and simple. As Bruno told me, "We take photos because we can and because we should." Local photographers, knowing the cultural terrain, practiced an inherently moral, inclusionary, and political photography. The ability to record and share images of the police was one of the more striking changes to take place after pacification.

The act was seen as contentious and held a degree of risk, but the fact that Bruno took pictures of the police at all indicated that they were considered different than drug traffickers.

My time observing the *fotoclub* gave me insight into the nature of street-photography in the pacified Complexo. With pacification, the *favela flâneur* felt comfortable exploring their community through photography, challenging the boundaries of the security paradigm. The *fotoclub* nonetheless experienced new and renewed forms of silencing within their images. They feared continued violence from drug traffickers and harassment from the police.

Distortion, Threats, and New Forms of Silence

One of the more noteworthy *favela flâneurs* to emerge after pacification was Raull Santiago. After working closely with *Voz das Comunidades* and other journalistic projects in the Complexo, Raull was hired as a consultant for O Globo's massively popular *telenovelas*. He advised television actors on the kind of slang and rhythm that goes into *favela* speech, and on ways that people react to *favela*-specific events such as shootouts. While Raull's job at O Globo distracted from the anti-violence activism, he hoped that, eventually, his efforts would translate into more positive stories about the Complexo. Raull quickly lost faith in O Globo's ability to depict the *favela* and he slowly withdrew from working with the network. Over the same period, his social media presence and his role as an intermediary between *favela* residents and a broader public was growing. The police had killed more than 40 residents in the year that he worked for O Globo, and his social media presence was almost exclusively focused on the critique of police violence. He used his social media page to publicize images of these searches and to share with his 50,000-plus followers the exact letter of the law and the resources available to them for free legal support.

Because of this growing visibility, Raull started receiving anonymous threats warning him to avoid critiques of the police and accusing him of supporting the drug trade. The threats continued as he challenged pacification police on ignoring rights of habeas corpus while carrying out random searches in the *favela*. He described how he grew up with drug dealers and claimed that because of this proximity, they had become friends. Police taunted him when he passed them on the street, asking if Raull would like to take their picture. The situation left Raull in the precarious position of encouraging engagement with a democratic state while, at the same time, fielding violent threats from representatives of the state.

Raull was not alone in his wariness of the Complexo's pacification police. The activists that I met seemed wary of a new type of censorship that emerged after the *favela flâneur* began to reshape the street-level narrative of pacification. Police demanded to inspect the phones of journalists. Others were hit by rubber bullets and tear gas. Some had guns pointed at them by the police. After he had organized a protest against police violence in the community, I spoke to Betinho, and he told me,

> I think everyone in the community understands that it is difficult to talk to the police. It is never easy. What do we do for the police? Not much. What do the police do for us? Nothing, they are horrible. But, between us and them, no one even says "*e ai?"* ("what's up?"). We have to always talk carefully and not talk to a police officer for too much time. It has to be obvious what we want and expect from them. I myself try to stay away. I take pictures and they usually start leaving the area when I have my camera out. They know what I want to do.

As Betinho suggests, the *favela flâneur* is subject to police surveillance. His street-level observations have lead him to distrust the police even while he understands the need to engage them as representatives of the state.

Betinho had personal reasons for suspecting that the state was not his ally in the fight against violence in the Complexo. By the time I had met him, he, his friends, and his community paper had already been the subject of two federal police investigations that suspected them of criminal sedition.

In reaction to the million-strong protests that took place in downtown Rio de Janeiro, the police formed a digital dragnet to capture online activists that were linked to street level violence and vandalism. Along with social media accounts that belonged to more radical anti-fascist black block organizations, five Facebook pages based in the Complexo were also placed under investigation by the Polícia Civil do Rio de Janeiro, Delegacia de Represão a Crimes de Informática (Civil Police of Rio de Janeiro's Information Crime Repression Delegacy). Operação Firewall (Operation Firewall) targeted a list of over 80 online activists and made 23 arrests.[25] A second operation called Operação Firewall II took place during the highly divisive 2014 FIFA World Cup and had a similar scope. Fortunately, no one from the Complexo was arrested for either of these operations. Nonetheless, activists believed that the investigation was a form of judicial harassment, retribution for exposing violence in the community and questioning Rio's image as an emergent cosmopolitan capital.

Beyond Betinho and Rene, there were a dozen other activists from the Complexo that were investigated by Operação Firewall. The groups under investigation interpreted Operação Firewall as a means for the police to intimidate and misrepresent an increasingly critical set of community journalists, effectively associating anti-violence movements in the Complexo with

[25] The operation name "Firewall" is a double entendre referencing both a physical firewall that prevents the spread of a fire and a digital firewall that controls the incoming and outgoing of information.

anti-fascist movements that used violence as a means to a political end. Most of the individuals associated with these groups preferred not to speak with me about the operation in fear that they could once again draw the attention of federal police. One activist told me,

> I work for political parties. I have a little shop. I always try to put positive images of the community on Facebook. I was shocked and confused when I saw [the activist's Facebook profile] in the newspaper. I was nervous it would affect some of the art projects I organize in the community…. In the end, nothing happened with the protests or the investigation. It was just a reason to bother us.

Most in the Complexo were no stranger to oppression by the police, but I found that those *favela* image-makers caught in the net of Operação Firewall were confused by the attention given to them by the police. The online profiles of Complexo activists mirrored the observational qualities of a *favela flâneur*: posting and re-posting images of street-level events. I had met all of the activists from the Complexo who were under surveillance. They were avowed pacifists and, instead of calling for violent revolution, they encouraged political engagement, critical awareness, and a heightened form of representation for the favela. The activists organized local protest marches, where some would paint themselves with the word "paz"(peace). During the tumult of the 2013 protests, more specifically, none of the activists from the Complexo encouraged violence or vandalism over their social media profiles. Furthermore, their politics were in line with a broader Brazilian public and party sentiment. For example, 89% of Brazilians approved of the 2013 protests and 35% of Brazilians were opposed to Brazil's hosting of the World Cup (Data Folha 2013, 2014).

During Operação Firewall, drug traffickers began to reemerge as violent censors in the Complexo. For example, *Voz das Comunidades* was invited by the founder of *AfroReggae*, an influential government-funded NGO that rehabilitated former drug traffickers, to use the top

floor of their building at the center of the Complexo. Soon after, and while violence in the Complexo began to increase, the founder of *AfroReggae* made several statements to the media that bemoaned the loss of life by both police and drug traffickers. In doing so, the founder of *AfroReggae* violated the *lei do morro* by speaking negatively and in public about the drug gangs. *Voz*, although innocent of provoking the drug gangs, soon after lost their new office space when, one evening, traffickers firebombed the building. Afterwards, *AfroReggae* decided to abandon the building and the Complexo entirely. When I arrived in the Complexo a little over a half-year after the bombing, the red, black, green, and yellow pin-striped building remained visibly burnt down the center.

Appearing mindful of the *lei do silêncio*, Rene and Betinho declined to discuss the firebombing with me, particularly as a speculative exercise as to what the motives and intention were of the arsonists. Betinho replied, "It brings problems, talking about violence when you feel it directly. We didn't lose much. Just a few computers." He avoided suggestions that drug factions were responsible for the arson, in contrast to what both the police and *AfroReggae* would later claim. Rather, Betinho told me, "We don't know *who* specifically did it…." He placed emphasis on the word "who" to suggest that a motive could be implied but that the exact culprits would remain a mystery, un-investigated, and, for all intents and purposes, forgotten.

Beyond these threats, at one point during my research, an anonymous individual or group hacked a number of social media accounts in the community and posted news in support of the police. There were also a number of fake social media accounts that claimed to represent local activists. Several authentic social media accounts were also hacked. The accounts would then post conspiracies about activists and trafficker activities in the community. *Favela* activists

would start new accounts and declare the loss of their previous accounts only to lose control of their replacement accounts and be required to start anew yet again. While those who lost control of their accounts were unsure of who was responsible, they recognized that the information being spread was anti-activist and pro-police.

As threats to *favela flâneurs* suggest, the democratization and modernization of *favela* streets were imperfectly experienced in the Complexo. The renewed threats towards *favela* journalists also reflect broader issues of press freedom in Brazil that go beyond more localized examples of a resurgent drug-dealer-enforced *lei do morro*. A 2016 report by *Reporters Without Borders* called Brazil a country of "30 Berlusconis" that form Brazil's politically- and socially-conservative media oligarchy (RSF 2016). This same report ranked Brazil 104th in terms of press freedom and cited increasing violence against journalists, as well as a lack of will at the highest levels of government and the media to offer greater protection to the press. Seven Brazilian journalists were murdered in 2015. The report suggests that violence stemmed from organized crime, police harassment, and outrage against corporate media. I personally recorded several dozens of acts of police harassment of the Complexo's *flâneurs,* including but not limited to the firebombing of *Voz*'s offices and Operação Firewall. These examples show that, while pacification permitted a new dynamic of critique and documentation, the *favela flâneur* was subject to new forms of state censorship.

Conclusion

Much like examples of the pacified citizen that I discussed earlier in this dissertation, the *favela flâneur* represents a digital re-birth of a pacified citizen: a contentious identity that is at once oppressed by the state yet able to achieve a sense of democratic inclusion. While residents of the Complexo experienced new forms of freedom and socio-economic inclusion as

the result of pacification, their symbolic role as agents of change often entailed a hidden politics that reproduced problematic historical inequalities. The *favela flâneur*, for example, was able for the first time to photograph street-life while, at the same time, being subject to renewed threats of oppression from the police and drug traffickers. The *favela flâneur* is given voice through security policy and, subsequently, uses that voice to critique the very pacified state that promises a subordinated form of inclusion.

On a more practical level, the *favela flâneur* demonstrates how images or, rather, image-making is essential to how the Complexo experiences a pacified sense of inclusion. Street-level image-making in the *favela* is only permitted through a reinterpretation of the *lei do morro* and by creating institutional value out of the social conditions that oppress. As pacified citizens, the *favela*'s *flâneur* re-imagines a *favela* public based on their claim to the city and their right to signify in the digital age. However, there remain serious questions as to whether the *favela flâneur* can disrupt a hierarchy of images in their community under the weight of new threats of increasingly powerful oppressors.

Chapter Six
Death on Repeat: Violence, Images, and Aggregation in the Creation of Pacified Publics

"*Ainda não vi o video. Não quero. Machuca demais*."
(I still haven't seen the video. I don't want to. It hurts too much.)
-Denize, The Mother of Caio
(Author's Field Notes January 2015)

In the previous chapter, I described a group of street photographers who document *favela* life and reflect the qualities of Walter Benjamin's Arcadian *flâneur*. In this chapter, I connect the *favela flâneur* to Benjamin's *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction* (1937). Benjamin argues that imitation, copying, and sharing cause a work of art to transcend the singularity of an event and an artist's original intentions (Buck-Morss 1986, 106). In terms of my ethnographic fieldwork, the reproduction of violent images over social media provided one of the more socially significant phenomena that I observed in the Complexo do Alemão. Images that were recorded and shared online by residents shaped the meaning of life and death in the favela, fostered new forms of social and cultural capital, and created a sense of solidarity within and between marginalized communities.

To illustrate the way that digital reproduction influences social understandings in and of the Complexo, I recount the case of a moto-taxi driver named Caio and the videos of his death that were reproduced online. While residents of the Complexo saw the images as proof that the police were the principle architects of violence after pacification, outside observers interpreted the images as an example of oppression that affects communities on the margins across the globe. Indeed, there was merit to this claim, with the sharing of violent images creating mutual awareness and a sense of solidarity between activists in the Complexo and international activist movements. However, the Complexo's residents described cultural and geographic barriers that

limited the potential of organizing a global anti-violence movement. Reflecting Benjamin's concept of mechanical reproduction, I find that digital images from the Complexo produce a unique sense of meaning depending on the social and political context in which it is reproduced.

The Death of Caio

The night of Caio de Maraes Silva's death was a particularly chaotic and well-documented moment in the Complexo's history. On an early evening about a month before the 2014 World Cup, police were using a local grade school for cover from drug trafficker gunfire when a large group of residents began to protest. After a tense few hours and a refusal to leave their tactical position at the school, the police shot rubber bullets and tear gas at a group of peaceful protestors. Videos recorded by residents and shared over social media showed a number of people, most of whom appeared to be parents or grandparents of children at the school, left bloody as they attempted to flee the police.

Shortly after videos of the protest went online, Caio received a call from a friend who needed a ride home from work. He picked up his friend and the two headed down a street on his motorcycle where they encountered a police roadblock. Within seconds, police pointed their guns at Caio. He put up his hands and an officer shot him in the thorax several times. Caio fell to the ground and died.

While there were no videos of the shooting itself, two videos showed the immediate lead up to and aftermath of Caio's death. In one video, a patron at a nearby clothing store captured Caio on his motorcycle as he drove past and out of view. Gunfire cracks off camera.

Caio's friend runs down the street screaming for help with a motorcycle helmet bouncing clumsily on the crown of his head. The cameraperson used a voice modulator to disguise her voice. Another video was filmed by a young man who spoke to a friend off camera. They appear to be recording on a rooftop several stories up from where Caio was shot. Police jostled Caio's limp body into the cramped plastic backseat of a patrol car. As the event unfolded, the two men on the rooftop spoke in hushed voices to avoid detection. One of the two warned, "*Esconde, esconde*" ("Hide, hide") while the other whispered "*Caralho!*" ("Fuck!"). As the filmmaker's reaction suggests, residents were both shocked by the nature of Caio's death and apprehensive about revealing their identities for fear of reprisal from either traffickers or police.

While I was not a witness to the event, I was only a hundred meters away from Caio when he was shot. Moments before the shooting, I got off a bus, after a day of volunteer work in Rio's downtown. A young man approached me and insisted that the path ahead was not safe. Before he ran off, I assured him that I knew my way around the community. I walked uphill and down a silent and darkened alleyway that runs parallel to the street where Caio was shot. As I opened the padlock on my front door, I heard several gunshots. I hurried inside and went to bed thinking that the gunfire, while worrisome, was nothing out of the ordinary for a night in the Complexo. By the time I woke in the morning, the two videos of Caio's death had gone viral on social media.

The Reproduction of Violence

Given the highly accessible nature of online social media, images of Caio's death had been shared, or repeated, thousands of times after being posted on YouTube, Facebook, and other websites. As an ethnographic observer, the reproduction of images allowed me to see the

Complexo's digital footprint, the community's reaction to violence, and the collective action that followed. Caio, one could argue, never owned the images of his death once they were posted online. Rather, his death was a collective event shared by his community. Those who were physically present to make the videos remained anonymous, while the local activists that shared the video did so without taking personal ownership. When Brazil's national media outlets presented images of Caio's death, they did so without citing the residents of the Complexo who made the images public. Some activists shared these videos online to reach out to sympathetic international observers that they had met through NGOs. Police used his death as a platform to argue for more resources and to discuss the collective mental health of their patrolmen. The images took on new meaning each time they were shared and engaged. Individuals who knew Caio personally no doubt related his death to the events of his life. His neighbors in the Complexo who did not know him still could see the images as a reflection of their own experiences. And most non-residents would have shared the videos of Caio's death as an indictment of exclusionary violence in the Complexo and the failings of pacification policy. With each instance of digital reproduction, an aesthetic meaning interacted with political and social meanings.

Through ethnographic observation, both on- and offline, I paid close attention to how this form of digital repetition across individuals and social spaces shaped Caio's afterlife. Anthropologists have discussed a similarly collectivizing force of everyday violence, most notably in terms of exploitative capitalism (Taussig 1992) and institutional abandonment (Scheper-Hughes 1993). They also provide a number of examples of how collective political action is carried out in the digital age (Escobar 2008; Juris 2008). Following the observations of

these ethnographers, I observed images of Caio's death give violence a new communal meaning removed from the singular experience and embedded in the reproductive potentials of the information age.

Images made Caio's death more authoritative and palpable. They captured an aesthetic validity that confirmed a sublime truth (Rochlitz 1996), or what Walter Benjamin called an "aura." For Benjamin, an original work of art gains authenticity through presence in a specific social context, time, and place. Technologies like celluloid photography disrupt the singular authority of pre-modern works of art by making representations accessible to the masses. Digitization advances this process even further by making the power to reproduce ubiquitous for the majority of Complexo residents who carried a smartphone with them at all times. Reproduction re-signifies the aesthetic qualities of the original and creates distinct meanings behind both the real and the reproduction. Most importantly, human perception has adapted to industrial modes of aesthetic reproduction, and modern society assigns increasing significance to the copy. As society begins to favor an artwork's reproduction over its original, the historically-rooted social hierarchies that inspired the original work can also be disrupted and transformed (Wolin 1994; 188). The reproduction transcends the significance of both the copy and the original (Deleuze 1994; Deleuze & Guattari 1980) and allows oppressed groups to challenge authority through mimicry (Bhabha 1984), iteration (Derrida 1977), and simulation (Deleuze 1994). Alessandro Angelini (2016) describes a process of mimesis in Brazilian *favelas* where young *favela* artists recreate their communities using recycled ceramic bricks and their simulated Lego bricks. These reproduced dioramas act as a backdrop for games that they themselves design. By reproducing the *favela*, Angelini argues, residents re-signify the aesthetic

value of the community and produce a mechanism to transport their perspectives outside of the limiting physical and social space of the shantytown.

The activist community in the Complexo also engaged in imitation, replication, and mimesis. They carried fake coffins at the head of protests to represent victims of police violence. They splattered fake blood at the feet of police. Activists did these things in order reproduce a sense of human horror and gore that they experienced and non-residents often recounted. When locals shared violent images of their community they similarly resisted the idealized and alienated depictions of Rio's *favelas*. For example, the digital images of Caio's death reproduced the violent aesthetics found in newspaper and broadcast television reporting about the *favela*. By circulating images of Caio's death that were produced by locals, activists consciously sought to critique alienated representations of the *favela*, the violent nature of public policy, and the dehumanized spectacle centered around *favela* life.

The reproductive potentials of digital technology allowed Complexo residents to shape the aura around their images in technologically unique ways. For much of the Complexo's history, film-based photography was prohibitively expensive. The small family archives of Polaroids and 35mm slides that I found were almost all damaged by sun, humidity, mold, and pests. What images I did see depicted an almost rural community that bore little resemblance to the dense concrete honeycombs of the contemporary Complexo. When these decades-old photographs of the Complexo were shared online, information concerning the intention of the photographer, knowledge of the names of the people depicted, and the year of the images was often lost to time. Rather, old photographs were shared online in order to express nostalgia for a partially imagined previous era. Digital technology challenged this more exclusive dynamic by

applying a sense of a-historicity to photographs, making them a collective experience shared indefinitely through continued digital reproduction.

Viewing images of violence is a surreal experience that asks the viewer to question what is real, what is political, and what is authoritative. Speaking of Benjamin and violence, Michael Taussig explains, "What we have to understand, then, is not merely some horrific process in which imagery and myth work out from a political unconscious to be actualized, but rather a socio-historical situation in which the image, of crime, for instance, is not less real than the reality it magnifies and distorts as terror's talk" (Taussig 1989, 14). Photographs, although implicitly understood by most who view them as a mechanical creation, cause individuals to question the nature of reality and assess what forms of authority exist in their specific social context. In the Complexo, this instinct to question was cultivated by a group of NGOs that trained young activists to critique images as critical objects (See Chapter Five).

All of the individuals from the Complexo empathized with Caio and saw his death as a tragic misfortune that could easily happen to them. As a father of two and a moto-taxi driver, Caio was a symbol of the working class. During his life, he also appeared detached from crime and its struggles. Caio's mother told me, "He was never involved in anything. He was a worker." His death was particularly shocking for a community where most residents identified as *trabalhadores* (workers) that made money from their physical labor. Driving a moto-taxi was typically a second or third job for many men in the community. One moto-taxi driver whom I often hired to take me around the Complexo told me,

> If you have a moto, you can make money. You can deliver things, take people places, get to other parts of town. People sometimes think we are crooks or drug dealers but every family has a taxi driver and most taxi drivers are family men. They are the blood of the community.

The comparison of the taxi driver to blood was no doubt intentional. Being a moto-taxi driver was an unsafe job, with little safety, few rights as a worker, and even less respect from other vehicles on the road. In the Complexo, moto-taxis in particular were targeted for ostensibly random police searches. During my research, for example, I recorded dozens of motorcycle accidents in the streets around my home. The motorcycle association, a loose confederation of taxi drivers that shared a network of government-built taxi stands around the community, was one of the few institutions that fought for and protected the rights of taxi drivers. Caio's death was what many in the community already expected for *mototaxistas*; the job was unsafe and sometimes deadly, and required a constant negotiation for respect as a legitimate form of labor on Rio's margins.

By recording and sharing Caio's death, residents of the Complexo demonstrated how authenticity is shaped in the digital age. Those who recorded Caio's death, for example, witnessed an authentic social and political event. As the digital images of Caio's death developed greater degrees of discontinuity between the time and social place of the lived event, individuals were inspired to create alternative forms of value which diverged from both official and popular narratives about the *favela*. The reproductive potentials of social media turned Caio's death into a tragedy of context, an unintended, avoidable, but ultimately predictable consequence of the violence against poor black people from the *favela*. Caio's death, particularly when viewed through highly circulated imagery, mobilized various interpretative frameworks, modes, and scripts. Social media fostered what Halverson *et al* (2013) call "mediated martyrdom," a collective identity made through the digital witnessing of violence. Caio was treated similarly to a martyr in the Complexo, and his death, when

discussed, often carried the aura of an “altruistic act” that allowed the community to recognize their collective social experience (Van der Pilj 2016). Furthermore, what began as a form of community mourning and critique of authority allowed activists and observers to celebrate the participatory potential of death (Van der Pilj 2016). Aesthetic repetition allowed Caio's death to become a symbol for the reproduction of violence in the Complexo. He and the images relating to him unified the community around their collective experience with violence. Digital reproduction became essential to how individuals in the *favela* related to oppressive authority.

Witnessing Pacification

Beyond evoking a general sympathy towards Caio as a working-class hero, videos of his death symbolized the Complexo’s collective misgivings over pacification and the changing narratives concerning police violence. To witness the videos of Caio's death was akin to witnessing the negative effects of pacification and the ever-present threat of violence towards the *favela*'s working class.

For the first four years of pacification policy, the police were boastful about their effectiveness in reducing crime. By the time I arrived in 2014, claims of security and inclusion began to crumble under a dramatic increase in violence between police and traffickers. The police became insular and cut off from the community. Many in the community believed that the presence of the police made death more frequent and less predictable, especially in terms of where violence was expected to occur and who could fall victim. In 2014 alone, fourteen residents from the Complexo were killed in shootouts between police and drug traffickers. Thirteen more were wounded and survived. Most of these casualities were caused by a *bala*

perdida (lost or stray bullet). Images of dead and blooded bodies dominated the social media feeds of Complexo residents. Videos of distant gunshots transformed the banality of everyday life in the *favela* into a politically meaningful reproduction of death. A report authored by Amnesty International entitled "Brazil: You Killed My Son" discussed violence in Rio's pacified *favelas* and concluded, **"**Recent public security policies have failed to halt extrajudicial executions. The military police continue to use arbitrary, unnecessary and excessive force on a regular basis, with total impunity" (Amnesty International 2015, 9).

For many residents and objective observers, the police, rather than traffickers, were the clear architects of the Complexo's violence. Even when police were the targets of violence themselves, the community blamed their hubris and neglect. The UPP's newly built precincts gave the police a base to launch *megaoperações* (mega-operations), and these became frequent targets for traffickers' potshots. Late one night, for example, a UPP commander was killed near my home. The captain was the third police officer to die in the Complexo that year. He was shot in the back while chasing a group of street-level traffickers as his subordinates trailed close behind. The police initially blamed traffickers for the captain's homicide. After calls from the commander's family, an official homicide re-creation took place, and investigators were *quase 100% certo* (almost 100% certain) that a police officer was responsible for the shooting (Coelho 2014).

The captain's death was indicative of the disconnect between the state's security proclamations, the experience of residents on the ground, and what was presented online. Police and the government struggled to establish a productive dialogue with community members but often blamed individuals from the community for the violence by describing them

as either traffickers or uncooperative civilians who impeded justice. The police carried out nightly *blitzes*, closed roads, and pointed their guns at every vehicle that passed. The dozen-strong overnight patrols were equally aggressive, with police frequently using offensive military tactics, pointing automatic weapons at most animate objects including people, pets, and vehicles.

In addition to their everyday interactions with the police, the increased circulation of violent images encouraged many in the community to villainize the police. Social media posts amplified the community's everyday familiarity with death and highlighted the local discourse concerning violence. Online social media allowed activists to share their visual evidence of these events, letting them establish a narrative in which violence was familiar, tragic, and often provoked by the police. They shared images of dead bodies and talked about the indignation that followed. They showed bullet holes in the side of buildings and family pets mutilated by police gunfire. Activist street photographers were often the first to document violent events and, as a result of their proximity, increasingly fell victim to violence themselves. Following Caio's death, a loosely organized group of young social media activists who called themselves Papo Reto (straight talk) became the leading voice against violence in the Complexo. According to members of the group, their name was a direct critique of popular media narratives that trivialized and politicized violence in the *favela*. Social media, and the images circulated on it, allowed Papo Reto, rather than the police, to control the narrative about Caio's death. Papo Reto shared images that they received from anonymous neighbors. Their posts quickly evolved into overt political critique of police officers, declarations of loyalty to the *favela* as a community and culture, discussions of legal and human rights, and, most importantly, a call for

political action against wanton violence. For example, a few months after Caio's death, Papo Reto posted a call to action on their Facebook page, "Attention Complexo do Alemão residents, don't stop bringing information of abuse by the military police and special forces in different parts of the favela. Let's go with cellular phones to the street and photograph and film whichever situation of abuse. Send them to Coletivo Papo Reto, Voz da Comunidade, Alemão Morro. Whichever one. Let's go. We here for ourselves!" (Coletivo Papo Reto 2014).[26]

Papo Reto reflected a practice that Jeffery Juris (2012) describes as "aggregation," or bringing together activists from different social and national backgrounds around one political cause—a common move among activist movements in the early twenty-first century. Sharing and horizontal participation, as opposed to hierarchical roles, demonstrates the potentials of social media to disrupt oppressive networks of authority. Juris argues that the aggregation of methods and beliefs makes decentralized movements like Papo Reto more sustainable. Alongside their use of social media to communicate a message of anti-violence, Papo Reto also embraced a participatory and non-hierarchical discourse similar to the one popularized by the North American anti-capitalist movement Occupy. Members of Papo organized protests and collectively announced *presente* (present) after the names of victims of police violence had been stated out loud. The death of Caio and the subsequent videos that emerged offered one of the more significant opportunities for Papo Reto to use their skills as Internet activists to rally the community around violence. Papo Reto facilitated most of the Complexo's on- and offline

[26] "Atenção Moradores do Complexo do Alemão, não param de chegar informações de abusos da PM e do BOPE em diversas partes da favela. Vamos por os celulares na rua e fotografar e filmar qualquer situação de abuso. Mandem para o Coletivo Papo Reto, Voz da Comunidade, Alemão Morro, qualquer um. vamos que vamos. Nós por nós." from: https://www.facebook.com/ColetivoPapoReto/posts/560449350748315

protests regarding Caio. While his family and co-workers played a significant role in spreading the news about his death, Papo Reto was responsible for using their well-known platform to aggregate the videos and share them with an audience outside of Brazil.

In large part because of Papo Reto's online circulation of the videos that showed the moments before, during, and after Caio's homicide, his funeral turned into a mass protest. I did not attend Caio's funeral, but I could feel my house shake from the hundreds of revving motorcycles that rumbled past the nearby site of his death. I watched videos of the funeral that members of Papo Reto streamed live over social media. One of the more dramatic videos of the funeral shared by Papo Reto, one that would eventually made its way to national television networks, showed a moto-taxi driver tearfully screaming Caio's name into the sky and being met with a sustained silence.

Caio's funeral represented one of the Complexo's more pronounced manifestations of digital protest turned real-world political solidarity. The reproduction of images, both of Caio's death and his funeral, played an essential role in establishing a local narrative about violence under pacification. Papo Reto's social media posts also developed cultural capital around new activists in the Complexo. Soon after Caio's death, for example, his mother Denize began to attend anti-violence protests in the *favela*. In part because the encouragement given to her by the Complexo's highly visible activist community, Denize frequently shared images of her son on social media and gave dozens of interviews to national news outlets. Much like Caio, she was a sympathetic figure and avoided charges of overt politicization. In interviews with the national and global press she discussed her sadness over a needless death, the fear she had for her grandchildren, and her anger that the system did not hold her son's murderers accountable.

Dozens of television broadcasts over the course of six months showed images of Denize crying while holding a printed photo of her son.

I found that the reproduction of videos also encouraged a performative reproduction of grief in the real world. I had several conversations with Denize concerning Caio that demonstrated a type of repetitive and reproductive performance relating her grief. By the time I first interviewed Denize at her insurance office at the center of the Complexo, she informed me that she had already given dozens of interviews and most likely had nothing new to say that I could not find in a newspaper. Reflecting this sentiment, the mother of Caio's child, who worked as Denize's receptionist, sat nearby with her young son and appeared bored with our conversation. Before I could ask a question, Denize stated, "I'll have to drink a lot of water, because when I speak about my son I cry." Taking a drink, she continued before I could ask a question:

> I was never political. I never wanted to be a politician. Now they're asking me to be a politician.... It's an election year and with all the attention militants from the Complexo are giving my son, the political parties think I could be a good candidate…. They think I am against pacification. I am not against pacification. I am for pacification. I have a business in the community and I never went near the drug gangs. My son never went near the drug gangs either. So I am for the police. I just want them to function like they do in the wealthy part of town. (Interview December 2014)

Denize's blame of specific police and institutions reflected a tactic of the Complexo's activist community, and the tactic of a broader digital inclusion community, to avoid the messiness of party politics. Rather, she focused on issues and actors that had subjected the favela to specific social and physical traumas. Denize was critical of how pacification police and policymakers realized their idea of security. Events like the death of Caio

allowed the activist community to solidify the focus on issues, policies, and uniquely violent individuals. Avoiding too broad of critiques allowed for the possibility to eventually work with sympathetic police and policymakers to prevent violence.

I asked how she heard about her son's death and if social media played a role. She responded immediately with a clear and practiced answer. "I saw him right before he went to go pick up his friend and I felt it. I knew that something was going to happen to him, and I told him that he should take care. A few minutes later, I get a phone call and I knew what was happening. He had already gone." I asked Denize how she responded to the highly circulated videos of her son's death. She responded, "I still haven't seen the video. I don't want to. It hurts too much." A client walked in immediately afterwards and Denize excused herself. After about fifteen minutes with the client, she paused and had me write down the names of several of Caio's acquaintances, who I could find on Facebook. I asked to take a picture of her in front of her office. She stood stoic and defiant. Then, she insisted that I take a picture of her smiling. She told me jokingly, "They never show pictures of me smiling in the paper." Indeed, the pictures that Denize shared of herself on social media most often showed her smiling. The pictures she posted online of her and her son showed both smiling. The portrait that she requested of me was the same type that she used to present her life story and the story of her child. With this final request, she acknowledged that others often reproduced photographs that differed emotionally from her preferred visual narrative.

Just as they focused on images of a crying and defiant Denize, the official police narrative of Caio's death disregarded the emotions and lived experiences of the community. Much to the chagrin of Denize and her allies, the police reproduced in their own visual narrative

a common justification for their abuse of authority. The UPP defended the actions of the officer that killed Caio by alluding to an undefined psychological trauma associated with policing the Complexo. An official investigation sought to calm critics by investigating whether post-traumatic stess rather than criminal negligence were to blame for Caio's death. There were clear problems with the investigation. Despite videos showing dozens of individuals on Grota at the time, official reports cited only eleven witnesses to Caio's death. Eight of the witnesses were police who claimed that they were defending themselves against an attack by drug traffickers when Caio approached. The police inquiry took an entire year running forensics tests on the bullet that killed Caio and confirming that the gun that shot him belonged to a police officer. Using another frequent defense in police shootings of innocent civilians, the police deflected blame to drug traffickers and, mentioned that one of their own was also wounded. By repeating a defensive narrative of police victimization, the government deflected blame for a problematic policy and refuted, in part, the oppositional yet authoritative digital solidarity fostered by Papo Reto and their embrace of Denize.

I saw Denize on the street a year after our conversation in her office. It was a few days after the investigation into Caio's death was concluded. She asked, "Did you hear? They said he's innocent, the police that killed my son. They said that he's the victim, that he is traumatized by the event." She spoke with a tone of acceptance, as if the police officer's declared innocence proved that the system was designed to reproduce injustice.

Parallels and discontinuities with Global Anti-Violence Movements

The reproductive nature of digital imagery allowed activists to aggregate local perspectives by finding allies in anti-violence movements from outside of Brazil, such as Occupy, Black Lives

Matter (BLM), and Las Madres da Plaza de Mayo. By drawing parallels to more global anti-violence movements, activists in the *favela* hoped that their images would produce similar forms of critical reactions from authorities and the international press. Foreign journalists also drew comparisons between their struggle and police violence in the United States, and even suggested that the violence in Brazil was "way worse" (Oatman 2017). Indeed, comparisons between the Complexo's embrace of imagery, and the use of images of African American victims, reveal both parallels and discontinuities.

Examples of racialized violence in the United States, such as the deaths of Michael Brown, Eric Garner, and Philando Castille, reflected for many the increasingly visible and visual nature of violence in the *favela*. It was particularly easy to draw parallels between Brown's case and Caio's: Brown was killed in Ferguson, Missouri, an impoverished and segregated city on the periphery of Saint Louis, just a month after Caio's death. Both were gunned down in the street by police who felt threatened by context rather than any substantive proof of threat from their victim. As Caio identified as *preto* (black) and *pardo* (mixed-race), critical observers saw skin color as an essential feature of the event. Images of the moments before and after their deaths circulated online, and there were attempts to both villainize and canonize the victims as martyrs. Lastly, the police officers that killed Caio and Brown both avoided charges for murder.

Other examples of police violence in the United States also seemed to reflect aspects of Caio's situation. Like Caio, both Garner and Castile became symbols of the working class and of fathers, and their deaths seemed to be due to the racial prejudice of the police rather than any actual crimes they might have committed. Activist groups like Papo Reto in the Complexo invoked the BLM movement by adopting the slogan "*Vidas na favela Importam*" ("Lives in the

Favela Matter"). By drawing attention to the biopolitical nature of police violence, the Complexo activists paralleled how *favela* lives, much like black lives in the U.S., were often devalued to the point that they suffered physical violence at the hands of their state and society.

Denize's relationship to an anti-violence group called Mães de Maio (The Mothers of May) also had international analogies. The group was formed by mothers of youth who had been killed in a 2006 wave of violent police operations that swept São Paulo. After images of Caio's death were highly circulated, the central figures of the Maes de Maio (Mothers of May) met with Denize on a number of occasions and attended several protests in the Complexo. They spoke about their experiences with police violence, and for a time shared Denize's story over their social media accounts. Their movement's name is a clear homage to the group known as the Madres de Plazo de Mayo (Mothers of May Plaza), formed by the mothers of those who were disappeared by Argentina's military dictatorship. Like their Argentinian counterparts, representatives of the Maes de Maio travelled the world, spoke with international human rights workers, and demanded accountability for the deaths of their children. To this extent, Denize benefited from the perceived parallels of her plight not only with anti-violence movements across Brazil, but also with an influential movement in the global south.

The anti-violence movement in the Complexo showed several practical and philosophical disconnects with their global counterparts. Journalists and other outside observers notably glossed over these disconnects in order to re-affirm activist and technological narratives from the global north. For example, news reports and articles that discussed Caio's death often focused on the more informative aspects of digital technology, and many of the

articles focused on the similarities between *favela* activists and activists from the Occupy movement, Arab Spring, and Black Lives Matter. These comparisons often promoted the commonalities between oppressed communities and the inclusionary potentials of digital technology.

Efforts to see the Complexo's anti-violence movement as a reproduction of more international movements suggests that outside observers share a set of underlying characteristics: a simplistic understanding of the *favela*, a desire to find similarities between the struggles of marginalized communities across the globe, and a desire to demonstrate the effectiveness of the Internet in reproducing inclusionary social conditions. Many outside accounts of the Complexo's violence ignored discontinuities in order to construct a cohesive narrative concerning the global north and paint *favela* activists as the peripheral adapters of broader technologies and movements. Caio's death and the reaction of community members was misunderstood and misrepresented through the dominant, outside concept of identity, technology, and life in the *favela*. Papo Reto's message created a ready-made counter-narrative for outsiders who wanted to critique the pomp of international mega-events and the sterile reassurances of military police press releases.

For example, six months after Caio's death, the *New York Times Magazine* published a multi-page profile about Papo Reto titled, "The Media Doesn't Care About What Happens Here." The story focused on Papo Reto and the help they received from the international community journalism NGO Witness. Witness trained the members of Papo Reto to systematically archive all of their social media posts. The NYT article drew parallels to other events that shared the technological features of Papo Reto, such as Occupy Wall Street, the

Arab Spring, and Black Lives Matter. It drew parallels to the video recording of Rodney King's 1991 beating at the hands of Los Angeles police and videos recorded in the Complexo with the latest generation of smartphone. As the *Times* article about Papo Reto suggests, Caio's death helped outside actors reproduce the various technologies of domination and information that dictated his life and death. They also strategically ignored the events and conditions that diverged from the dominant narrative about technology potentials in the *favela*.

My immediate reaction to the article was that the title, "The Media Doesn't Care About What Happens Here," printed in one of the world's most well-known media outlets, implied that no other members of the media cared about the Complexo or its activists. However, there was ample evidence to the contrary. A quick online search at the time of the article's publishing yielded dozens of articles and profiles that mentioned Papo Reto and that were written by influential journalists from national corporate media, national independent media, and international NGOs. Furthermore, the article failed to mention other ways that the media was giving a voice to the Complexo, including Raull's job at Brazil's largest media corporation, O Globo, the presence of an English researcher throughout the New York Times Article, or Papo Reto's tens of thousands of followers on Facebook. Finally, although the *Times* article was prominently featured online and advocated for the utility of social media in subverting a dominant narrative, it did not link to Papo Reto's Facebook or Twitter profiles, and failed to show posts and images that encouraged the community to embrace the social media activists.[27]

[27] For more information about Papo Reto, please see:
https://www.facebook.com/ColetivoPapoReto/
@CPapo_Reto

Instead of telling the story through the words and images of the activists, the *Times* reporter included his own pictures in the article and focused on his own lived experience with the group.

The article demonstrates some of the more problematic approaches of outsiders who hope to draw parallels between more global trends and activism in the *favela*. Specifically, the article acknowledged a set of contemporaneous contexts that shared elements of digital technology, but nonetheless, struggled to explain how local meanings were structured around these images. The article embraced a problematic narrative concerning the transformative potentials of digital technology in marginalized communities, and ended with a broader discussion of the viability of online platforms to make people in authority more accountable for their actions while failing to discuss the solutions to the Complexo's particular case. The reproduction of images in the NYT article facilitated the appropriation of the Complexo's anti-violence movement by describing activists through a readily understood motive and a globally understood method of visual critique. While the article was well received both inside and outside of the Complexo, and eventually nominated for international awards in journalism, it was as much about global movements as about the *favela*. Its narrative was constructed at the expense of more factual reporting that may have accomplished a more lasting visibility for community activists in the Complexo.

As the *Times* article suggests, and as I have explained, outside observers sought to locate ideological parallels between the *favela*'s brand of activism and more global activist movements. Indeed, Papo Reto was modeled after the Occupy in the US, and other *favela* activists drew methodological inspiration from yet other global movements. However, the Complexo's Ocupa movement appeared to be more of a branding strategy than a practical and

theoretical descendent of northern activist movements. Both the inspiration and the collective goal of Ocupa Alemão differed significantly from the anti-globalist and quasi-anarchist aspirations of the Occupy movement that emerged in Manhattan after the 2008 financial crisis. As Brazil's mass protests transformed into election year politics and the impeachment of the president, some of the younger and more energized Ocupa participants from the Complexo moved their attention from the economic issues facing Brazil to the images of police violence that were reproduced online. Two years after Caio's death, on the eve of the Olympics, a delegation of BLM leaders arrived in the city as thousands of activists, organizers, and journalists parachuted into the *favelas* of Rio to document a faltering pacification policy. They were hosted by the Mães do Maio and supported by other international NGOs. The visit was covered by dozens of international news sources and broadly advertised online as a means for BLM to globalize their movement. Several online articles suggested that BLM leaders were seeking to apply their goals outside of the English-speaking world.

Still, most of my informants in the *favela* were unaware of the BLM movement or their presence in Brazil. I spoke to an activist from Papo Reto named Fabio, who had met with the BLM delegation during the Olympics. He told me,

> I only stayed with them for part of a day and it was outside of the Complexo. It was a positive thing; but, they didn't really leave a strong impression. We shared an open table to talk to the press and they were really cool. But, really, it was only this one day and we haven't really been in contact since. Maybe someone from the Mães do Maio had a stronger impression. (Interview September 2016)

I asked if he felt that the visit changed the relationship between the Complexo and similar anti-violence movements in the US. He replied,

> There was higher visibility during the Olympics and they gave us respect by visiting us. There's the problem with physical distance between our groups. It

> seems we have our problems that grow and change. All of us militants know, we have to focus on the part of the world we are from, we have to fight our own fights. We are conscious of our shared oppression, if not before, then after the visit. We can grow together from there, but our fights are unique and they will resolve themselves in unique ways.

Fabio believed that remaining part of an international discourse was important for activists in the Complexo, but that the problems of a pacified *favela* required uniquely local solutions.

I asked about the parallels between violent images from the U.S. and the Complexo, and Fabio described an inherent empathy that individuals from these communities have for one another, particularly after seeing images of violence.

> I don't see all the stories, of course. I try to understand most of the headlines in English and they look just like the headlines from our papers. They show black and poor people from the ghetto dying. I think people in our communities always knew this happened on the other side of the world, but now, with social media and these types of encounters, we have proof.

According to Fabio, the reproduction of these images, while not indicating complete similarity between the parallel movements or even creating lasting connections between them, grew the aura and meaning of the violent images; it made violence more authoritative and its victims more real.

Speaking with activists in the months and years that followed Caio's death, it was clear to me that there was little fetishism on the part of Complexo residents for BLM, Occupy, or other non-violence movements. These movements were references that provided racial, classed, and political analogies between the two communities. However, police abuse was perceived as much through the lens of the Complexo and Brazilian pacification as through the lens of trans-national blackness or the universal fight against police violence. Furthermore, several activists expressed hesitation to support ideologies from the global north, given the

U.S.-backed dictatorship that brutalized previous generations of *favela* activists. Activists from the Complexo were also keenly aware of the socio-economic history of the *favela* and how it contrasted with *o gueto* (the ghetto) of the United States.

Rather than drawing one-to-one parallels between global activist movements, *favela* activists such as Fabio suggested that a more general aesthetic of injustice and oppression was being reproduced abroad. The reproductive qualities of violent images frequently emerged as a point of unification between the Complexo and other communities. Keisha-Khan Perry (2013) believes that black resistance in Brazil is frequently and falsely equated to Black Nationalism or other movements in the United States. Race is seen as only one of many forms of marginality and identity through which violence and marginality is experienced in the *favela*.

I found that the Complexo's activist community felt a greater affinity with political protests in Latin American's indigenous communities rather than of the highly visible movements in the United States. Much like the collections of images that have emerged from the Brazilian *favelas* and the inner-cities in the US, countless images have been shared online depicting violence against Tupi. The Tupi are Brazil's largest indigenous nation and have suffered the theft of their land and constant threat of economic abuse since the arrival of Europeans. Members of the Tupi community frequently take part in highly publicized acts of civil disobedience such as land invasion and sit-ins. Corporate media has often villainized native Brazilians as pre-modern others who disregarded the land rights of white settlers. Videos produced by Tupi activists discussed a long history of abuse from the Brazilian state including genocide and the misappropriation of lands, and showed protestors being attacked by militias or police.

The preference for videos showing violence from Latin American and Indigenous communities could be explained as a result of their cultural and geographic proximity to the favela. However, activists in the Complexo often embraced a global narrative relating to digital inclusion in marginalized communities. The original meaning and context behind visual representations of oppression were secondary considerations for social media activists. Rather, much like outside activists did with the Complexo's anti-violence movement, the favela residents understood violent images from native communities as a reproduction of their own marginality, an aura of oppression transported from one marginalized community to another by digital technology.

At times, activists in the Complexo spoke of blackness, indigeneity, and the *favela*'s economic informality as one in the same. At one point during my research, a group of activists in the Complexo named Raizes em Movimento (Roots in Motion) went to an indigenous Tupi village a day's car ride to the north of Rio. The leader of the group, Alan Brum—an activist who had organized political action in the community for over twenty years—explained to me,

> The youth in the Complexo, they need to go see how people fight for five hundred years. The *favela* is like a *quilombo* (escaped slave encampment) and an *aldeia* (village). Those living in the forest, trying to escape injustice, living with land that the state does not consider theirs. The state, colonizers, have tried to remove them from their land for generations and their resistance is emblematic of what we want to see in the Complexo. We want to see a permanent fight like what the Tupi fight.

Activist leaders in the Complexo like Brum, hoping to both represent and guide social consciousness in the community, acknowledged the parallel concerns of communities suffering from similar socio-economic and institutional conditions. Blum believes that a solution to this aesthetic of violence was the reproduction of the Tupi's sense of struggle and the ethos of

resistance inherent to indigenous communities. Along this vein, anthropologist Jan French (2009) has argued that racial and ethnic identities in Brazil, particularly within afro-descendent communities seeking cultural and political recognition normally reserved for indigenous communities, are often co-constructed and overlap with each other. While ideas from the global north concerning race and democratic participation can have a radicalizing effect in marginalized communities, the historical context of these radicalizations are often particular and non-uniform (Brown 2006). Connecting racial experiences in Brazil to racial experiences in the US through imagery reflects a pan-African consciousness. However, contrary to what scholars have expected, increasing the visibility of violence by connecting images and movements globally does not inherently provoke change in the institutions that systematically reproduce racial and economic segregation in the *favela* (Skidmore 1983). Rather than continuities, there are parallel ways of visually reproducing marginality that evolve from unique social contexts.

Conclusion

Caio's death and the activist community's response provides an example of how digital reproduction can act as a filter for meaning, community, and collaboration of specific events. The reception of videos of Caio's death demonstrates how Benjamin's aura operates in the digital age and what this might mean for marginalized communities struggling to position their perspectives as authoritative views of the world. The life and death of individuals represent important windows through which to discover how communities experience an aura of authority through digital reproduction. The subjects portrayed in digital images, and the desires behind the activists movements that reproduce them, are not superficial. Rather, they point to the unique social and political contexts through which violence is filtered and understood.

The shifting and transforming aura of violent images provides a further example of a hidden politics of digital reproduction that I describe throughout this dissertation. Digital images produce multiple meanings and reactions. Digital reproduction allows for a wider social reach for an image and opens the images up to a larger diversity of opinions than previous forms of aesthetic reproduction. Discourses of digital disruption, digital utopia, and, in the case of a global anti-violence movement, digital solidarity reflect the dominant narrative of a network society. While these perspectives may not be misguided, in an objective sense, they are by no means the only type of social transformation produced by the information age.

Chapter Seven
Two Deaths: The Potentials and Limits of *Favela* Publics

In previous chapters, I discussed how the digital reproduction of images shapes a collective understanding of street-level violence in the Complexo do Alemão. In this chapter, I consider how an issue-based public uses violent images to mobilize individuals from outside of Complexo, recounting the protests that erupted when videos of a 10-year-old boy and a middle-aged schoolteacher dying in front of their homes, shot by police, circulated online. A large number of activists and politicians from outside of the community took part in the protests, while dozens of sympathetic journalists documented the event and shared their experiences with international audiences. In the weeks and months that followed, however, the protests appeared to have no impact on security policy. Corporate media disseminated a narrative of police victimhood while police continued to use the same street-level tactics that resulted in the majority of shooting deaths in the community. Considering the government's lackluster response to popular protest in the Complexo, I argue that digital technology encourages a weak public that is highly visible and organized but has a limited ability to shape government policy (Fraser 1991).

In light of ethnographic observations made during a pronounced period of violence in the Complexo, I ask how digital technology shapes real world political praxis and ideas of public debate. I describe how widespread public concern over street-level violence mobilized the Complexo's issue-based public. Scholars have shown that issue-based publics result from democratic inclusion (Dewey 1927) but often fall victim to appropriation by elite representatives of the state (Lippmann 1922). Ethnographic observations of online publics echo this tension and shed light on how social media creates publics based in counter-narratives and

in opposition to authority (Warner 2002; Kelty 2008; Juris 2011). Similarly, the Complexo's anti-violence movement reflects digital technology's ability to bring together a democratic public, as well as the state's ability to appropriate an inclusionary discourse to justify renewed forms of oppression.

"No Funk, No University"

When Jose Beltrame, Rio de Janeiro's Security Minister, introduced the framework for pacification policy in 2008, he described political conditions that would allow *favela* residents to be included as active members of Brazil's democratic public. Central to this policy was a new community-based policing unit named the *Unidade de Policia Pacificador* (UPP). The UPP was built from the ground up to work in proximity with *favela* residents. It proved effective in building bridges between the state, middleclass Brazilian society, and a growing civil society in the *favela*. However, despite pacification policy's inclusionary promises, the UPP ignored repeated complaints from citizens regarding police abuse, insufficient access to formal education, and the prohibition of public gatherings. Given the UPP's apathy about reconsidering the day-to-day implementation of policy, activists in the Complexo began to label pacification as a form of *maquiagem* (cosmetics) that used a democratic discourse to disguise the continued exclusion of *favela* voices.

As an ethnographer, I witnessed dozens of organized interactions between *favela* residents and pacification police. In almost every interaction, I found that the UPP misunderstood and distorted the concerns of their critics. The UPP frequently steered clear of discussing their policing strategies and instead used meetings with the community as an opportunity to promote the presence of social projects in the pacified regions. There was a noticeable power dynamic that favored the views of state actors: police presented their plans

and the residents were only allowed to ask questions. This dynamic effectively contradicted the UPP's goals of community policing and community engagement (See Chapter Three). Instead of having an institutional mechanism where residents could co-construct security policy alongside police and other government bureaucrats, the UPP encouraged residents to be informed but passive recipients of pacification policy.

I attended several meetings organized by the government where local politicians, activists, and citizens gathered to hear updates from the UPP. At these meetings, residents were updated about the government's most recent plans for their community. In one instance, an army general discussed his recent visit to an elementary school. As he pointed to pictures of his visit with students and teachers, he failed to mention the particular lessons he had learned during the visit or how the visit might shape the implementation of pacification policy. However, he did explain the optics that he hoped to achieve with the visit: "We want to appear closer to the community than previous armed forces." The police showed a desire to present a more humane image but made no clear attempt to gain knowledge that could influence security policy along those lines.

In another meeting that I attended, Rio's municipal government invited a Dutch city planner to present plans for a system of bike paths throughout the *favela*. A dozen neighborhood association presidents looked on as the city planner switched between English and a foul-mouthed street Portuguese as he explained the need for bicycle education classes in local grade schools. He showed a planned system of paths around the community with Photoshopped Dutch children riding along red Photoshopped red bike lanes. He played a digitized super eight film from the 1980s that showed elementary school physical education

classes where children rode in figure eights around a courtyard. One neighborhood president asked the planner where street vendors would be allowed to sell their goods if the proposed routes were realized. Not taking the question seriously, the Dutch city planner laughed and joked that Holland did not have popcorn sellers obstructing bike paths. A year later, the neighborhood president's concerns proved appropriate. The plans for red-painted bike lanes were scrapped in favor of blue paint because the governor thought the red could promote the colors of a local drug gang. The community's popcorn vendors then ended up using the practically invisible, blue-painted bike lanes while bicycles continued to share the road with cars. The state's representatives missed an opportunity to avoid such confusion when they ignored the queries of the community that they promised to include.

In another meeting, the UPP hoped to ease tension with the community by demonstrating their "interviewing tactics" (*táctica de revista)*. In the demonstration, a group of four officers, guns drawn, pushed an unsuspecting pedestrian against a wall and yelled orders at him. As the room full of a dozen activists and local politicians looked on, an anonymous voice murmured, "*por que?*" ("why?"). After one neighborhood association president asked if the police had to be so aggressive given a presumption of innocence, one government official stated, *favela* youth "only understand if police yell." Ignoring the concern from a notable member of the community, the official implied that effective policing required a loose interpretation of civil rights and unfriendly interactions with *favela* youth.

In most cases that I witnessed, the police responded to critique at these meetings by repeating their position, denying the validity of their critics, and positioning themselves as the victims of favela violence. At one meeting organized by police and a group of local mothers at a

high school in the Complexo, one army colonel stated his belief that the UPP's critics were the central obstacles to peace in the community. Responding to a question from a student about the death of youth in the community, he said

> You confuse victims with their *algoz* (butcher). Most police are also black. Most come from poor neighborhoods, and we have to hide when we go home. We are victims of a corrupt system that oppresses. We die. We live in terror. Your critiques only make our goal of peace more difficult to achieve.

The stance behind his response was clear: police are humans with complex social lives, not just representatives of an oppressive state. However, in effect, the colonel's response ignored the misgivings of community residents and suggested that, because of the police's shared victimhood, residents should refrain from critique.

Excluded from the policy-making process and ignored when they complained to authorities, *favela*-based activists held frequent meetings where they could discuss strategies for influencing policy in their community. I attended a meeting in early 2015 concerning the construction of a university in the Complexo. If the project went through, many at the meeting believed that the Complexo would house the first higher education institution to ever be built inside of a shantytown. The city had bought land and put money aside, but there appeared to be no political will to carry out the project. The meeting was hosted by Raizes em Movemento, one of the more notable, and longest running, NGOs in the Complexo. Raizes founder, Alan Brum, acted as a mentor for many of the Complexo's younger social media activists, and often provided a physical space for a generation of artists and activists who felt more at home organizing online. The meeting had no fixed agenda. One activist brought concert speakers for a group of musicians who played protest music on dueling guitars. Graffiti artists painted a mural on a nearby home; another group cooked churrasco and shared baked goods. Several

international journalists and activists recorded the event, and many of the local activists took to an open microphone to discuss their opinions on the university and pacification police. The dynamic was a clear contradiction of the falsely inclusionary dynamic promised by the UPP.

The majority of the meeting took place away from the microphone when attendees informally conversed about their work. Most of the one-on-one conversations that I overheard focused on the university. For many, a shantytown university would provide an incubator of the type of public thought, social critique, and economic development that had been historically lacking in the Complexo. Even though they hoped for the university, however, most activists believed that the state would not respond to the community's requests. One local activist-photographer named Betinho described to me a private conversation that he had with a local city councilman at a recent meeting hosted by the UPP. "He told me that he wants to replace rifles with books…. Instead of this, the police showed up well-armed and we didn't get any books." After mentioning this to a local councilman, Betinho compared the immediate gathering to a *baile funk* (funk dance). The UPP had prohibited funk music because of its close financial association with, and veneration of, drug traffickers. Betinho explained,

> The police say that we are apologizing for drug traffic when we go to a baile. I'm no drug trafficker, but this is what we do. It's our cultural patrimony. If you deny us funk, you deny us culture, you deny us who we are and who we represent. They don't care, the UPP doesn't care. No funk, no university. They just want us to take a bullet or hide. I hope we can take the street back from the UPP.

As Betinho's response suggests, residents saw the street as an essential political venue while police officers believed it to be a strategic position. Many residents viewed the prohibition of *baile funk*, and the UPP's apathy towards the university project, as indicative of a broader form

of political repression and a symbol of the failure of the UPP to listen to the concerns of community members.

The UPP's failures loomed large over other aspects of the meeting as well. As the meeting came to a close around dusk, a number of gunshots rang out nearby. Immediately afterwards, a police patrol sped past the gathering in a pickup truck. Some activists took photos. Most others looked on quietly. In a move symbolic of the broader political dynamic in the Complexo, the police ignored the hundreds gathered on the street and instead looked down alleyways for possible threats from drug traffickers. The law-abiding and civil-minded community group had an observable animus towards these representatives of the security state. The UPP, a group charged with guaranteeing democracy, had become a symbol of oppression that opposed inclusion in the *favela*.

A month after the meeting, an increase in deadly shootouts led the activists to forgo protests over the university and instead focus increasingly on police abuse. Nonetheless, the activists took the lesson learned in those smaller meetings, and organized a large anti-violence protest within the community. The Internet played a central part in this process. Social media provided a platform where residents could articulate and join a common voice, and broadcast their views in order to influence individuals beyond the Complexo. Much as in the meeting concerning the university and the now-prohibited *baile funk*, online activists hoped to translate their desire for democratic discourse into real world events.

The Complexo's Public

I came to see this anti-violence movement as representing a public spirit that had historically been lacking in Brazil's *favelas*. During the Republican Era (1888–1934), literacy and income requirements prevented the majority of Brazilians from participating in a direct democratic

vote. Non-governmental institutions, such as the Catholic Church and trade unions, focused their charity work on assisting Brazil's white working class and ignored the impoverished afro-Brazilian populations living on the urban periphery. For much of the twentieth century, a series of technocratic and dictatorial governments enacted policies of wholesale *favela* removal that effectively dismantled the community's internal political mechanisms (Perlman 1975). Because of this, *favela* residents lacked a public space in which to independently organize and critique oppressive policies such as pacification.

During Brazil's 1988 re-democratization, neighborhood associations developed a patron-client relationship with national political parties (Gay 1994). According to many of the *favela* residents with whom I spoke, neighborhood associations were effective conduits for government resources, but rarely benefitted the community as a whole. They believed, instead, that a patronage relationship encouraged neighborhood associations to direct state resources to a small group of political supporters. To this end, most of the activists I spoke with were hesitant to engage in party politics for fear of their social causes being consumed by various forms of patronage.

For example, during my research, I lived with a woman named Tia Bete (see Chapter One and Two) who was recruited as a congressional candidate by one of 26 political parties in Brazil: the Brazilian Communist Party (PCB). Over breakfast one day, we spoke about the 2014 presidential election and she described her experience with electoral politics:

> I lost the election because all the people on the left voted for PCdoB (The Communist Party of Brazil). I imagined I was a better candidate. I knew more people and I thought my politics made more sense. I go to all of the meetings and my home is open to anyone who needs it. No one knew where the other guy lived, who he was. But, I learned it is more like a football game. People cheer for their team. Really…they don't care about the policies. Only what their team has

> won in the past. I hadn't given them anything…. If they received a house or a promise for a house from the guy, I was never going to receive their vote.

Bete suggested that her political competitor won not because of a more attractive political platform that better represented the community's stances, but rather because he was able to provide favors to party loyalists. I found that many in the community shared Bete's belief that social and civil rights issues took a political backseat to a party politics that only provided public housing and work programs to a select group of residents.

The rise of drug-trafficker parallel states during the 1980s and '90s also presented an obstacle to the spread of Brazil's civil society in the *favela*. As I discuss in previous chapters, a trafficker-enforced *lei do morro* (law of the hill) prohibited public discussion of security conditions, and often led to the death of politicians who spoke out against violence. Many middleclass NGOs were also hesitant to invest resources that could be compromised by traffickers. This timidness in non-governmental civil society prevented *favela* residents from having access to a representational alternative to party politics.

By the start of my research, the *favela*'s historical conditions of party patronage and criminal censorship had undergone a dramatic transformation. A four-year-old pacification policy had installed permanent police forces, minimized the political censorship of drug traffickers, and sponsored a number of social projects that encouraged civic and social inclusion. Over the course of my time in Brazil, a number of young social media activists from the Complexo were invited onto national television to discuss their lives and the desires of their communities. A group of young leaders emerged from these projects and developed professional connections in government ministries, corporations, and international non-profits. Online activists, rather than political patrons, became the most politically significant individuals

in the Complexo, despite their lack of formal institutional roles and clear political affiliation. For the first time, the Complexo had a group of leaders who were effective in representing the needs and opinions of the *favela* without being beholden to party politics or the machinations of drug gangs. By the time rates of violence began to rise again in 2014, activists had developed an anti-violence discourse that paralleled the sophisticated rhetoric and goals of other global human rights movement such as Occupy and Black Lives Matter. Activists leveraged their relationships with corporations, international charities, and Brazil's elite politicians to draw attention to violence in the Complexo.

I found that the Complexo's activist community closely paralleled what John Dewey (1927) described as a "public"—a group that shares a common civic philosophy and has the ability to organize independently of the state. For Dewey, a public has no formal leaders, roles, or rules. A public is organizationally "horizontal" (Lazer 2015) or non-hierarchical, and incorporated individuals from a broad range of socio-economic and political backgrounds (Escobar 2009; Hardt & Negri 2009). Eschewing traditional socio-economic distinctions, a public fosters identity through collective action, like street protests (Habermas 1991; Fassin 2015). Informal actions also offer marginalized individuals a reciprocal and un-alienated means to communicate with authority (Rogers 2012, 12). In this respect, politicians and scholars often present a strong and independent public as a reflection of a healthy democracy.

Paralleling the ideologies of other technology-based publics, the Complexo's anti-violence movement embraces social media as a tool for technical experimentation and the democratization of knowledge (Kelty 2005). According to Jeffery Juris (2008), information technology plays an essential role in reconciling the goals of international activist movements

with the desires of local movements. Juris cites the example of activist online listservs from the late 1990s that laid the groundwork for all of the early twentieth-century global justice movements like Occupy and the Arab Spring (Juris 2012, 266). In the recent history of activist network societies, global social justice movements aggregate their ideals across vast spaces and geographies using the Internet, and, in return, become attuned to the politics of less visible allies (Juris 2012, 269). Social justice movements in particular seek to inscribe the ideals of a networked public onto a physical space (Juris 2012, 267). Mobilization in a digital space, as Juris argues, gives vitality to a public when street-level protests become inconvenient or unsustainable.

As I noted in the previous chapter, relationships between the Complexo's local activists and international anti-violence movements are mediated by a shared aesthetic of oppression and a policy environment that makes it easier for middleclass Brazilians to invest in a public space. Violent images from the Complexo act as a public text that allows the community's perspectives to exist beyond the geographic and social space of the *favela*.

According to Michael Warner, individuals can become part of a public through the simple acts of creating, reading, and sharing a text, and by forming an opinion on its content (Warner 2002, 61). Much like the circulation of a text, I see the digital reproduction of violent images as creating collective understandings of oppression. Violent images allow Complexo residents to mobilize sympathetic individuals regardless of their physical and social place. Through circulation, these images transform from intimate community texts principally circulated between Complexo residents, to objects capable of reaching international activists and

journalists. In this respect, violent images of the Complexo became a form of public knowledge that encouraged a wide range of individuals to discuss and interpret the *favela*'s oppression.

The Complexo's anti-violence movement also demonstrates how divergent interpretations of a text can cause publics to fracture. Warner describes a hierarchy of dominant publics and "counter-publics," with the former supporting dominant interpretations of a text and the latter embracing critical and counter-hegemonic narratives (Gramsci 1971; Warner 2012). The Complexo's anti-violence movement depends on a counter-hegemonic discourse that critiques the dominant public's crime talk and offers an alternative political narrative. Unlike corporate media outlets that often use violent images to demonstrate criminality in the Complexo, residents use violent images to demonstrate oppression in the *favela*. In this framework, both the public and counter-public engage violent images of the Complexo, but their interests and interpretations of these images conflict.

Even when a public and counter-public appear to be philosophically aligned around a singular narrative, they can become internally coopted by elite sectors of society, such as corporate media and political parties, and manipulated to achieve a goal contrary to the interests of the broader group's membership (Castells 1983). The public, although ideologically horizontal, is realized in diverse ways through a hierarchy of roles and responsibilities. Dewey (1927) notes that a public depends on a collective of social actors with a diverse set of political and cultural interests. Members of a public each participate in unique ways—activists organize community members, for instance, and journalists report their opinions. Walter Lippmann (1922; 1925) suggested that publics are often weakened by elites who disguise their continued pursuit of authority by distorting the experiences and needs of the broader democratic

constituency. The elite tend to believe that they are the only members of the public who are competent enough to present a policy, judge its results, and decide what type of knowledge is made available to bystanders. Convinced of the authority of the elite, publics cede their collective authority in order to achieve greater influence for their opinions (Rogers 2012, 19). This dynamic often leads to abuses of authority. Without a good-faith desire to accommodate marginalized opinions, a public becomes a mere illusion and an "unworkable fiction" (Rogers 2012, 16). This more damaged form of public can result in the reproduction of oppression, as the elite use their authority to manipulate the democratic claims of a marginalized counter-public (Warner 2002, 63). In the favela, I saw this appropriation in the way major corporations promoted their brands by employing members of the Complexo's activist community as spokespeople and sponsoring public events.

Dewey's optimism and Lippmann's pessimism demonstrate the varying ways in which scholars describe democratic publics that stray from political ideals. The police and Brazil's policymakers and corporations embraced the discourse of inclusion but residents of the Complexo often felt that authorities used a discourse of public inclusion to disguise renewed forms of oppression. Marginalized communities have a more intimate understanding of oppression than, say, middleclass television audiences that form opinions about social marginalization from afar. In this sense, the Complexo's public was united by a common critique, but this critique was understood in contradictory ways and produced inconsistent actions among policymakers. As a result, key policy promises were abandoned, such as the promise for a police force that would use conversation with the community as a basis for an intelligent and less violent security policy.

Considering this divergence in the understanding of what inclusion means, I see the Complexo's anti-violence movement teetering between what Nancy Fraser (1990) describes as a "weak public" that acts only to create and disseminate opinion, and a "strong public" that can influence laws and the power of the state. As I noted in previous chapters, middleclass and international digital inclusion NGOs often appropriate a discourse of inclusion in order to conform to a utopian belief concerning digital technology, attain cultural capital for "doing good," and disguise malfeasance through a process of converting regulatory fines into social projects. Most of the Complexo's activists understood this dynamic and were aware that outsiders came to their community with a wide variety of political goals. These same activists ceded their authority to outside allies in order to achieve even minimal amounts of visibility for their community's issues.

Violent events, such as the death of innocents at the hands of police, would ultimately test the inclusionary potentials of the Complexo's public sphere after pacification. Complexo activists organized independently around images of violent events. Elite actors from international NGOs, corporations, and the police participated in these events and claimed affinity with the ideals of peace and inclusion. However, this affinity was often insincere, as corporate media and politicians returned to an authoritative discourse that promoted the use of violent force. In this respect, pacification policy both supported an inclusionary discourse and threatened a public that formed around issues of violence in the Complexo.

A Violent March

For the three years following pacification (2011–13), the Complexo had one of Rio de Janeiro's lowest crime rates. However, by the end of 2014, the number of shooting deaths returned to levels seen before pacification (Extra Online 2014). Most residents viewed the UPP, a force

designed from the ground up to work in proximity with *favela* residents, as the central perpetrators of this violence. Instead of being driven to include *favela* residents in the policy-making process, pacification policy allowed the police to make drug conflict more intimate and everyday. As violence escalated, police repeatedly pointed out that they too were victims of this violence. Alongside dozens of civilian deaths, one in every five police officers shot in Rio de Janeiro in 2014 was stationed in the Complexo (Extra Online 2015). Seeing themselves as victims of *favela* shootouts, police repeatedly justified an escalation of force and conflated the growing concerns from *favela* activists with the tragedies that befell police. The logic was cyclical and helped to intensify the negative effects of a policy that was increasingly estranged from the public that it was meant to help.

The frequency of violent events grew steadily until March 2015, when the Complexo went through 23 consecutive days of shootouts between police and drug traffickers. The period started with the death of 34-year-old Military Police Corporal Anderson Fernandes da Luz, who was shot in the head from behind while on patrol in the Complexo. The day after his death, Luz was eulogized on all of Brazil's major television news journals. Going into a level of familial detail that reports rarely did for dead youth from the Complexo, reports mentioned his wife and child. Police responded to his death with an intensification of street-level force. The night after Luz's death, Rio's elite Special Forces team, *Bope,* arrived in the Complexo. The police were supported by helicopters and an armored troop carrier. The elite squad swept the community and engaged in alley-to-alley firefights with suspected traffickers while normal police units established roadblocks and searched random vehicles. For the next 22 days, the police repeated these sweeps and searches at dawn, high noon, and night.

As an ethnographer witnessing this quick escalation of violence, I followed the lead of my neighbors and limited my time on the street. During the more tense periods of conflict, residents frequently advised me to "*toma cuidado*" ("be careful"), "*fica longe da patrulha*"("stay away from the police patrol"), and not to worry ("*nao preocupa"*). In each case, I felt as if residents were hoping to pass on a set of experiences that had helped them to physically and mentally avoid the violence in their community. One day around noon, I walked onto the patio outside of my room to see a Vietnam-era Huey helicopter emerge over a nearby hilltop. About a hundred yards away, the helicopter dove towards a group of houses and fired a few dozen machine gun rounds. The helicopter then escaped beyond the tree line only to return and complete the strafing another five times. After seeing a helicopter strafe my neighborhood with gunfire, I began to leave my room only to eat breakfast and dinner with my roommates. I spent most days locked away, looking at social media. Perched four stories high and behind thick cinderblock and concrete walls, my room felt relatively bulletproof.

While physically separated from my informants, I began to see myself carrying out a type of sensory ethnography, relying mostly on my sense of hearing in order to glean cultural knowledge about the Complexo (Pink 1991). Ambient noise came through my windows and bounced off my walls to make an echo chamber capable of encapsulating the Complexo's street life. Domesticated birds sang while hanging in outdoor cages. Street dogs barked at passing motorcycles. Neighbors yelled across rooftops. Funk music thumped out of crackling concert speakers. Gunfire pierced noiseless nights. In the morning, I woke to a police helicopter making shallow passes over the Complexo's metal rooftops. The walls of my room boomed and fluttered for minutes at a time.

One morning, over a cup of coffee with my housemate Arlindo, a burst of automatic gunfire rang out a hundred meters away. I commented that the trained precision of the gunfire made it sound like it was coming from the police. Arlindo, 65, had lived in the Complexo for 40 years and had acquired a deep knowledge of the sounds of violence. Arlindo remarked, "Fireworks sound happy. Guns sound different. Those sounds were not happy." While I associated the gunfire with a specific group of social actors, Arlindo heard gunfire and expressed a basic emotion, something learned and experienced. As a longtime member of the community, Arlindo's emotional response to gunfire no doubt reflected a collective experience that allowed neighbors to co-construct understandings of physical space even while isolated.

While community members reacted to the violence by becoming more cautious and isolated, the police reacted to the increase in violence with more aggressive street patrols. The police had installed shipping containers in flashpoints of violence around the Complexo. The containers had the dual effect of putting the police in closer proximity to citizens, while also entrenching security operations in the most densely populated parts of the community. During the most intense days of violence, a group of traffickers encircled one of these containers. Threatened by a barrage of gunfire, the police were forced to retreat to a nearby mechanic's garage. The police subsequently installed concrete roadblocks and parked a ten-ton armored troop transport in front of the garage.

Later on in the day, a police captain gave an interview blaming drug gangs for the violence. He said, "traffickers were reacting to the increase in arrests in the region" (Carvalho 2013). By the first week of March, Rio's governor declared the Complexo a "red flag" area, meaning that the process of pacification had been stalled or reversed, and police could take a

more militaristic posture. Residents interpreted the precarious and ever-intensifying posture of the police as a call to avoid contact with the UPP unless they wanted to be accused of taking sides between the police and drug traffickers.

Due to their demographic association with drug gangs, young men remained particularly cautious about passing areas occupied by the police. One afternoon, and a few days after the aforementioned container was abandoned, a police patrol engaged a group of known traffickers in a nearby alleyway. A shootout between police and traffickers erupted. Suspected traffickers Rodrigo de Souza Pereira, 24, and Matheus Gomes Lime, 18, were killed. Images posted by residents and shared by activists on social media showed their blood cascading down a concrete stairway (O Dia 2015). The police retrieved a 9mm handgun, binoculars, a handgun clip, bullets, and a radio from them. Within an hour, a police spokesman was on national television describing that particular shootout, and its results, as justification for the violent tactics.

Later that same day and while the spokesman's interview was still being replayed every hour on national television, Elisabeth Alves de Moura Francisco, a 41-year-old grade school teacher, who grew up in the Complexo, was killed by a daytime UPP patrol. She was shot in the mouth while hiding from a shootout in the doorway of her home. On social media and television, a viral video repeated the aftermath of the shooting. In the video, Elisabeth's body is seen being limply carried out of her home by a group of five men. The police stand awkwardly at a distance. The woman who recorded the video begins to tremble, weeps, and calls out to God as it becomes increasingly clear that Elisabeth has passed (O Dia 2014). The video was

posted on social media immediately after it was recorded and dominated the social media timelines of many of the Complexo's activists over the next twelve hours.

That morning, I drank coffee with Tia Bete and overheard her tell a visiting neighbor that concerned friends were contacting her via the mobile application WhatsApp. Tia Bete laughed while telling her neighbor, "Everyone is contacting me thinking that Professora Bete, that this Bete that died, was me." The confusion was understandable. Both shared the nickname Bete, though the victim was often called Professora and my housemate was often called Tia. Both were educators and mothers who lived within a hundred meters of one another. Professora Bete was even a former student of Tia Bete, and worked at a *crèche* (daycare) that Tia Bete helped to found in the early 1990s. While Tia Bete may have been saddened or even shocked by Professora Bete's death, the tone of their conversation seemed to assuage some of the emotions surrounding the event. Tia Bete alluded to the fact that news of Professora Bete's death had reached a large audience beyond the Complexo, and her reaction suggests that Professora Bete's death was noteworthy even for a community accustomed to violence.

As night fell, a few dozen residents stormed the abandoned UPP container. They set fire to mattresses and trashcans, eventually burning the canister beyond repair. The police responded by shooting tear gas into the crowd. A hundred meters from the protest, a 15-year-old boy was shot by the police. The police reportedly found a handgun on him, but the boy's father maintained his innocence. Further complicating police accusations against the 15-year-old were *favela* residents who suspected that the police may have planted evidence to justify the shooting. That same night, a police officer was again shot, but this time he survived. The police released no further information about the incident. While there was some doubt about

the teenager's innocence given his age, Arlindo told me, "*a gente sabe quem é bandido*" ("we know who is a trafficker"). Instead of remaining silent, which would be the case for someone involved in the drug gang, Arlindo inferred that the community would correct misidentifications of individuals with drug traffic.

The morning of April 2 was noticeably tense. Police patrols had ten to fifteen officers instead of the normal four. The elite *Bope* unit stormed the community and began to aggressively search homes next to where Professora Bete lived. At one point, a military helicopter hovered high over the community. A second helicopter from *O Globo News* flew just above. The police helicopter sent images to Rio de Janeiro's IBM-built big data operations center while O Globo's helicopter broadcasted images of the community across Brazil's national television.

Later that day, a video appeared on a Facebook page named *Complexo Alemão*. The video showed the body of a 10-year-old boy named Eduardo de Jesus Ferreira sprawled out next to a doorway, staring blankly upwards, shot in the head, alive but unconscious and barely breathing. Possibly mindful of the bad press they received for images of Professora Bete's death, police blocked onlookers from helping and claimed that no one could touch the boy because of rules relating to active crime scenes. While the police delayed, the boy, Eduardo, bled out. The police marched away as one of Eduardo's neighbors yelled "*assasino!*" ("murderer!"). Within an hour, the streets around Eduardo's home began to fill with hundreds of angry neighbors. They protested the level of violence that had consumed the community over the previous three weeks and demanded immediate justice for the death of Eduardo.

Local activists quickly disseminated the video to major news networks, independent journalists, and international charities.

There was a general public shock over Eduardo's death at such a young age. I sat with Bete, watching the news reports concerning the death of Professora Bete that had taken place the previous day, when we began to see the first posts relating to the Eduardo's passing. Tia Bete lamented that she had several grandchildren, nephews, and students the same age as Eduardo. She told me, "These kids watch cartoons and play video games. Politics are not for them."

Within a day, secondary sources edited this video and replayed it tens of thousands of times. These videos were shown on three different televised news journals and reached millions of viewers. The Internet provided an international platform as well. The first videos that appeared were uncensored and gruesome. Televised versions of the images later censored the bullet hole in Eduardo's cheek and the blood that splattered on the ground. Sensing a growing public backlash, the police spoke to television stations and insinuated that Eduardo was working for the drug trade. Brazil's largest news network, O Globo, normally offered editorial views that were uncritical of police accounts but released an interview with Eduardo's mother that called the UPP's description of events into doubt. Eduardo's mother stated, "I will never forget the face of the police who ended my life. When I ran to talk with him, he pointed a gun at me. I told him, 'You can kill me, you have already ended my life….'" Referring to Eduardo, she continued, "He always said that he wanted to be a fireman. He studied all day, participated in school projects, only got good grades. Why did they do this with my son?"(Silveira 2015). By

publishing an opinion in such detail, O Globo appeared to back the mother's account and take a rare stance that opposed the UPP.

Giving popular credibility to the event, O Globo reported that social media hashtags like #*GuerraNoAlemao* (*#WarInAlemão*) were gaining popularity. Sensing something slightly exploitative about the tone of O Globo's hashtag, activists from the Complexo promoted the counter-hegemonic hashtag *#PazNoAlemão* (*#PeaceInAlemão*). Eduardo's mother went on television holding a photo taken earlier in the day of her smiling son. Activists encouraged many in the Complexo to go to their rooftops while waving white. Videos on social media showed the hills of the Complexo densely sprinkled with white cloth waving in the wind. Large columns of residents walked up and down the hill chanting, waving flags, and demanding the peace that was promised by the pacification policy.

Within 24 hours, a number of national and international activist organizations appeared in the community and began to interview local activists about the increase in violence. The police stopped, searched, and threatened several community journalists with arrest in the misguided hope of preventing bad press. Within the next 72 hours, the same activists who were being searched by police, and whose opinions were being shared over the Internet and national television broadcasts, would find a political momentum to organize a 5,000-strong protest.

Professora Bete's and Eduardo's deaths provided a central issue around which a sympathetic public could organize. In previous generations, mobilizing an international public around the death of an individual in the Complexo would have been highly unlikely. The democratic potentials of the Internet combined with the inclusionary promises—and failures—

of pacification police, however, provided a unique environment in which locals could mobilize around critiques of violence in the Complexo.

As the sun set the day of Eduardo's death, a hundreds-strong group of protestors marched down the Complexo's main street and towards the abandoned police container. My informant Betinho was photographing the event for his community newspaper *Voz das Comunidades* and was shot by a rubber bullet after police began throwing tear gas at protestors. More police arrived and cut off access to the community's main thoroughfares. Casas Bahia, the multinational electronics chain that had recently built a store in the community, canceled an Easter celebration after their storefront turned into an overnight protest site.

On the morning of April 4th, I received five messages on Facebook and WhatsApp from friends who lived outside of the Complexo. They had seen the events of the last 24 hours over their social network newsfeeds and expressed their sadness, disgust, and rage over the murder of innocents. The Complexo's digital activists and their community successfully established an online narrative that obscured the hegemonic discourse from the state—both the national media and government—about security and economic development.

The activists organized in front of the *moto-taxi* stand—the same stand where Caio, the police-slain *mototaxista* worked—at the entrance of the Complexo's main street. The principle organizer was a local party planner named Heclimar. He brought a flatbed truck with large stacks of speakers to project speeches and music. Caio's mother, Denize Moreas da Silva, gave the first speech. She rallied the crowd by describing the injustice of her son's death, the disappointment of not receiving an adequate investigation from pacification forces, and the

council she received from her community. She screamed to a crowd of 300 residents: “I am a woman. A woman of Facebook. A woman of the street. Come to the street with me.” By invoking gender, social media, and public space, Denize hoped to build a collective identity within the growing crowd.

The Complexo’s civil society materialized through several performances that day, as the result of Eduardo’s death. An evangelical pastor spoke and prayed for peace. A graffiti artist began to spray a representation of the Complexo onto a large piece of particleboard. Three hip-hop artists performed slam poetry in front of the protestors. Children painted their bodies with the words “*paz*” (peace) and “*CPX*” (an abbreviation for Complexo do Alemão). The word “*paz*” was invoked several dozen times during the speeches, and was the central uniting idea around which the Complexo’s public organized that day. What defined peace in the Complexo was not necessarily universal, but speakers uniformly discussed the end of police-sponsored violence. Helcimar, while introducing one speaker, turned to a contingent of Globo reporters and police and yelled, “Drug dealers did not send us here. We did this.” With this statement, Helcimar sought to preempt a common refrain of security forces and corporate news that *favela* residents were complicit in the drug trade, and that to be against police violence was an apology for traffickers who killed police.

When he referenced both the failed university and the frequent closures of schools after shootouts, a local rapper named Sergio received the loudest applause—“I want these kids in school.” The phrase was spoken into a loud speaker only a few meters from a large contingent of police. A number of educators came to mourn both the loss of a fellow educator and what may have eventually been one of their students. One teacher called, “My students

are not bandits!" Another read a list of children under ten years old who had been murdered by police in pacified *favelas* since 2007. The list had over a dozen names. After each name, the crowd declared "*presente*" (present). The educator shook fretfully as he said the final name on the list, "Eduardo."

Just before the march left the stage area and began to walk, Marcelo Freixo, a university professor famous for inspiring the character of a civil rights activist in a Brazilian film, and a future candidate for mayor of Rio, rallied the crowd. "The Complexo should not be seen as an area to be conquered, a war. We have to see it as a place where people and families live." Then, a group of well-known Internet activists guided the protest as it started to move in a path around the community. Some people danced. Some held signs calling for peace. Some cried. Three dozen motorcycles led the parade. About 5,000 marchers followed close behind. At the tail end of the march, Helcimar stood on top of a flatbed truck full of speakers that projected the 1990s' *favela* anthem "*Eu Só Quero Ser Feliz*" ("I Only Want to Be Happy"). Marchers called to their neighbors on *favela* hillsides. Residents hung out of their windows waving white flags. Passing cars honked their horns in support. When police vehicles drove past them, marchers threw insults and jeered.

Visually documenting the event was a central means by which activists could produce and disseminate a symbolic text concerning violence. About 40 of the marchers had professional or semi-professional cameras that produced newspaper-quality images. They also took pictures and recorded video with their cellphones. I had gotten to know many of the photographers over the last year, so I followed along with them with my own camera. They

posted high-quality images of the march in real time over social media, and some of these images were even reproduced by major news sources.

Confusing for most in attendance, the police appeared to take part in the protest as cautious and distant spectators. About 45 police brandishing a variety of riot gear and rifles—presumably loaded with rubber bullets—marched directly behind. A police helicopter flew overhead and at times drowned out the protestor's speakers with the thumping of its propellers. A large camera mounted on the helicopter's nose beamed images to Rio's command center, a state-of-the-art IBM smart-city built for the World Cup. A handful of police also brought professional-level cameras and documented the event. Many of my informants expressed confusion over these actions. Nonetheless, a thorough observer would have understood their actions to be in line with countless previous declarations of victimhood made by police. Later, the police would infer that they, too, marched against violence.

News copters from O Globo and their principle competitor, SBT, hovered in the same air as police helicopters. Several other news stations and journalists followed on the ground. Clad in crisp blue combat vests, the Globo unit on the ground was hounded off by a group of protestors screaming, "*Globo assasina*" ["Globo kills"](O Globo 2015). The event was captured by an independent videographer and posted on the Internet. The march ended peacefully with the police dispersing long before the route ended. News vans from major networks also packed up and left before the end of the march. About 300 marchers held hands and prayed for peace in front of a church before dispersing.

Images of the march filled my Facebook and Twitter newsfeed. Major news organizations, activists, and everyday people shared images. The next day, Easter Sunday, other

events were organized around the city in solidarity with the Complexo's march. *Favelas* and wealthy neighborhoods alike held demonstrations. The same activists who organized the march held a small vigil for Eduardo on Copacabana beach with a crucifix and mock coffin. Images of these protests also circulated heavily over online social media and major television news networks over the following days. The activists used real world protest to find common ground with the state and elite actors while, subsequently, using the Internet when real-world protests became unsustainable.

The Return to Exclusion

The long-term effects of the protest revealed some of the weaker aspects of the Complexo's emerging public. Corporate media, in an existential crisis over their support of the state and their support of peace in the Complexo, attempted to shift the dominant narrative from blaming the police for overly zealous policing to blaming stress. The police embraced this narrative by, once again, claiming that they too were victims of violence in the Complexo. As the narrative of police oppression transformed into a narrative of police victimhood, the Complexo's activists lost an opportunity to influence policy discussions and draw the attention of a broader public that had emerged following the circulation of particularly violent images.

Corporate news reports directly following the protest reaffirmed an elite commitment to pacification policy and a renewed support for the police. For example, on the Sunday immediately after the protest, the national television journal *Globo Reporter* visited a UPP container in the Complexo. The video showed sterile white-tiled walls covered windows with duct tape and cardboard, bathrooms that looked barely functional, and muddy tile floors. An anonymous officer told the crew that he did not feel safe in the container. The report focused

on a complaint made by the UPP's principle architect, Rio's Security Minister Jose Beltrame, who believed that the police abuse was linked to a lack of financial dedication on the part of the government. Days after the O Globo report, Rio's governor, Luiz Fernando Pezão, promised R$30 (around US$10) million for increased patrolmen and fortifications throughout the community. Throughout the state's reaction, policymakers refused to address aggressive policing tactics, the need for educational and healthcare infrastructure, and the lack of social opportunity in the *favela* that drove many youth into the drug trade in the first place. Rather, government actors sought to amplify state authority and perpetuate the violent strategies that led to a highly visible public protest.

The march produced a limited and brief victory in terms of a tactical thaw on the part of the UPP. Following the renewed commitment to peace made by the Brazilian state, there were five straight days without a shootout. Activists in the community expressed a reserved sense of accomplishment. A group of mothers who lost their children to police violence were invited to speak to federal representatives about human rights violations. However, on the fifth day of peace, a police helicopter carried out an hour-long reconnaissance mission over the Complexo. For about 20 minutes in the early morning on the following day, a police helicopter made repeated, low passes over the community. I turned to my phone and saw a Facebook post from Helcimar. He wrote, "I hate to wake up to the sound of helicopters." Foreshadowing the Complexo's immediate future, Helcimar alluded to a new normalcy involving police operations and the necessity to once again become comfortable with violence in his community.

In the year that followed Eduardo's death, the Brazilian state openly opposed the public's call for justice and embraced the narrative of police victimhood. At each step of the

investigation into Eduardo's death, the state (i.e., Brazil's federal criminal justice system, elected officials, and civil policy) reproduced a narrative that, while not directly critiquing activists in the Complexo, sought to undermine the opinion that pacification reproduced oppressive social conditions. Investigations were carried out, but the state refused to press charges against the officers who killed Eduardo and Professora Bete. First, the prosecutors sought to examine the possibility that Eduardo's death was a legitimate use of force or, rather, that the 10-year-old boy armed with nothing but a cell phone was a legitimate threat to police armed with automatic weapons. This argument was difficult for the State to maintain given the widely-held public belief that Eduardo, as a 10-year-old who aspired to be a fireman, did not participate in the drug trade. Ballistic tests came back inconclusive but stated that the bullet that killed Eduardo was indeed from a policeman. However, both federal prosecutors and the police made public arguments that it would be unconstitutional to charge an officer without confirmed forensic evidence. The official conclusion to the investigation stated that the police were in pursuit of traffickers during a legitimate execution of force, and that Eduardo was caught in the crossfire. No officers were charged, and no moral or financial compensation was offered to Eduardo's family.

In reaction to the acquittal, Rio's governor promised that the army would reoccupy Alemão. He followed this promise by declaring,

> Whatever was stolen in the metropolitan area of Rio de Janeiro was taken to the Complexo do Alemão…the area was abandoned for 30 or 40 years. No one entered there…. We never had a utopia (an idealized plan) that we wanted to resolve (the community's problems) in eight or ten years…. We have to be there permanently, with security, with social services, and not give up. (Ovidoria Vai Receber Denuncias da UPP 2014).

By framing the community as a haven for informal, illicit, and illegal acts, the governor's prejudice reaffirmed the belief of many residents—that pacification was merely cosmetic and meant to disguise the exclusionary authority of the police. In practical terms, the governor's comments demonstrate the state's inability to recognize policy complaints. Rather than reducing the possibility of conflict, the government continued to see violence as a zero-sum game, where even the slightest authority ceded to drug traffickers meant a political loss for the state. While the pacification policy makes claims of democratic inclusion, the government appears more prone towards violent policies that reproduce problematic forms of oppression.

Conclusion

The Complexo's street protest offered a glimpse into digital technology's potential to mobilize a diverse public around violence in marginalized communities. Violence normally allows authorities to suppress democratic publics, silence victims, and re-enforce the power of oppressors. Digital technology has the ability to elevate the experience of victims and re-center democratic publics around issues that are important for marginalized communities. The violence was both experienced first-hand by local *favela* residents and witnessed from afar by spectators watching television and reading online social media posts. Digital technology proved particularly useful in mobilizing local and marginalized, alongside non-local and elite, perspectives. Quickly-planned street protests represent one of the more dramatic ways that online critique can lead to real-world action. However, the success of short-term mobilization over social media appears unconnected with the long-term potential of a public that seeks policy change.

The events surrounding street protests in the Complexo also call into doubt policing programs that promise democratic inclusion but, in practice, allow little more than improved public relation methods. Pacification policy, while promoting the inclusionary and democratic potential of community policing, dictates a tight control over public space and constrained public discourse. These restrictions force notable citizens in the *favela* to find alternatives to the inclusionary mechanisms of pacification policy.

Furthermore, the Complexo's street protests demonstrate how community policing policy can let oppressive institutions appropriate critical political thought and, subsequently, thwart democratic publics. Aligning with Jeffery Juris's analysis of the Occupy movement, the return to normalcy and the demobilization of street-level protests in the *favela* could be seen as an opportunity for the Complexo's anti-violence movement to "renew itself" and become rejuvenated around new issues and causes (Juris 2012, 271). Indeed, several possibilities for rejuvenating the Complexo's anti-violence protests emerged in the years that followed the 2015 street protests. Local activists received frequent invitations to travel the world and present their experiences at prestigious universities and institutes. These interactions elevated the opinions and perspectives of shantytown residents so that they were considered equal to the more elite institutions of global civil society. These actions demonstrate a *favela*-based public ready to adapt to political conditions in the *favela* without being coopted by the patronage relationships that coopted neighborhood associations. Without close attention, however, various opportunities for *favela* activists to interact with outside and elite political actors can, in Nancy Fraser's terms, weaken the Complexo's public.

Conclusion
The Country of the Future, The World of Yesterday

Throughout this dissertation, I have described a hidden politics of digital reproduction in which digital inclusion projects help to disguise renewed forms of structural violence in Rio de Janeiro's *favela*s. For my ethnographic field site, the Complexo do Alemão, the funding for and products of digital inclusion were inherently shaped by a security policy called *pacificação*. The connection between technology and social reproduction produced several observable contradictions: social media encouraged a critical perspective among *favela* residents but often reproduced a crime talk among outsiders; NGOs promoted a critical digital pedagogy but embraced middleclass worldviews that were alienated from the favela and allowed corporations to disguise more exploitive aspects of Brazil's market economy; and social media activists were praised for exposing violence in their community but, as a result, encountered state censorship and discursive appropriation. In each of my examples, an imagined future created by digital inclusion comes into conflict with the favela's reality of pacification and the reproduction of state authority.

Considering the technological and social futures of the *favela*, I conclude this dissertation by asking how beliefs about progress in Brazil help to reproduce past forms of oppression. I discuss Stefan Zweig, one of the most influential interpreters of Brazil's future, and his final literary works, "Brazil, The Country of the Future" (1941) and the "The World of Yesterday" (1943). Zweig's work suggests that visions of Brazil's future fail to honestly address past social and political traumas. Influenced by Zweig's work concerning the trauma and progress, I see the idealized future promised by pacification and digital inclusion as a reproduction of oppression. Considering the doubts surrounding democratic inclusion in Brazil,

I argue that an included future must consider a marginalized past and present.

Hope and Disappointment

When I began my graduate research in 2008, Brazil was in the midst of a 10-year economic boom. Millions of Brazilians were eased out of poverty through government social programs and a diversifying global economy. One notable sign of this boom was the ever-increasing number of consumer electronics, such as cell phones, laptops, and digital cameras, available to a new middle class from the favela. Rio envisioned itself as a model for urban development after earning the right to host both the Olympics and the World Cup, investing heavily in social and infrastructural projects, and significantly reducing street-level violence through its pacification program. Most Brazilians with whom I spoke were optimistic about their country's future.

For those living in Rio's urban periphery, however, there were obvious hints that hope for the future was misplaced. Over the course of my research, I had hundreds of conversations that revolved around the terms *inclusão digital* (digital inclusion) and *pacificação* (pacification). My informants often used the term *maquiagem* (cosmetic) to describe how the inclusionary discourse of pacification policy, of which I understood digital inclusion to be part, disguised systematic oppression in the favela. At more cynical moments, someone would often ask, "*O que vai acontencer em 2017*" ("What will happen in 2017?"). The question was rhetorical, and suggested that after the 2016 Olympic games, the Brazilian State would abandon its promise of peace and development in the Complexo. These same informants also lamented, "*Brasil sempre vai ser o pais do future*" ("Brazil will always be the country of the future"). Those who used the second phrase consciously alluded to Brazil's history of arrested development, particularly on the country's social margins. This second phrase, when spoken by my informants about the

Complexo, implied that the *favela*'s inclusion into Brazilian society would be forever delayed and that future interventions into marginalized communities would continue to produce oppressive results. In the context of the efforts of anti-violence activists, hope for a digitally included future was set further and further into the future.

By the end of my research in late 2016, the inclusionary future promised by pacification policy was replaced by the specter of an increasingly oppressive police force and a growing number of derelict development projects. Seventy-seven thousand *favela* residents were evicted from their homes between 2009 and 2015. Three thousand residents were evicted in the Complexo alone. The Complexo had no measurable economic growth over a decade, while Brazil's economy as a whole grew ten percent year over year. And the newly installed pacification police were ultimately as violent as the drug dealers that they were meant to dispose.

External political and economic factors precipitated the Complexo's decline. In 2015, Brazil's economy stalled and then began an 18-month recession. Brazil's president, Dilma Rouseff, whose party had supported many of the development programs in the Complexo, was impeached. The austerity-minded politicians who took control afterwards made dramatic cuts to public healthcare, government food programs, and funding for education.

What had been a brief moment of attention on *favela* issues also diminished over time. The thousands of reporters and activists who "parachuted" into Rio to report on the Olympic games mainly ignored *favela* issues in favor of editorials that questioned whether Brazil was a good choice for the games. Zika, a disease that causes fetal microcephaly in pregnant mothers, caused more journalistic alarm than issues pertaining to the *favela*. The polluted waters of Rio,

which would feature prominently in Olympic aquatic events, appeared in news headlines almost as often as Zika. When the media discussed security, they focused on armed robbery in tourist neighborhoods and a scandal involving a false police report filed by American athlete Ryan Lochte. Most international news sources ignored the 95 police shootouts that took place during the games. In Rio's pacified *favela*s, 31 people died and 59 were injured. In the Complexo alone, stray bullets killed a 43-year-old woman and 69-year-old woman. In contrast to the large protests that took over the Complexo a year earlier, most activists in the community were traveling internationally or participating in Olympic events. Compared to a year earlier, when thousands of marchers took to the streets of the Complexo to protest the death of two residents, there was a noticeable absence of public action.

Almost immediately after the games, my informants' pessimism over the future of Brazil proved valid. The Complexo's most visible development project, a *teleférico* (cable car system) that cost as much as a year of police operations and required the removal of 3,000 homes in the Complexo, was indefinitely shuttered with news reports describing a misappropriation of funds by one of Brazil's largest transportation firms. The architect of pacification policy, Jose Beltrame, announced his retirement and put his hopes for peace behind the de-criminalization of illegal narcotics.

The collapse of security and development in the Complexo confirmed what residents had repeatedly declared about the cosmetic and insincere nature of pacification policy. The Complexo's greatest hope for continued representation, a group of digital activists who could effectively present critical perspectives to a broader Brazilian public, appeared scattered. Some spent months abroad and were supported by international human rights NGOs. With a growing

economic crisis, other activists lost their Brazilian sources of corporate and government financial backing. Brazil's politics, following a trend seen across the globe in 2016, turned increasingly populist and hostile towards marginalized communities. At the same moment, Brazil's liberal elite, a group that had traditionally called for more democratic form of security policy, were now weakened by constitutional crisis and numerous corruption scandals. The year 2017 was fast approaching and an inclusionary future seemed increasingly further off.

The Country of the Future

The hidden politics of digital reproduction that I discuss throughout this dissertation reveal a problematic logic that is often used when imagining Brazil's future. When my informants uttered the phrase, "Brazil will always [*sempre*] be the country of the future," they invoked Stefan Zweig's 1941 book *Brasil, Pais do Futuro* (*Brazil, the Country of the Future*). They added "always" (*sempre*) in order to critique the anticipatory logics of Brazil's elite and the inherent limits of Brazilian society in achieving an abstract promise of socio-political progress.[28] Much like the cases that I describe throughout my dissertation, Zweig presented a future that selectively re-imagined social potentials from the past and present.

At times it appears that Zweig's ideas of the future intentionally distort the racism, classism, and socio-economic violence that shaped Brazil over the last five hundred years.

[28] Zweig writes four page paragraphs. He writes about the beach in terms of attendance but not the intensity of the sun or the temperature of the waves. Zweig's perspective, although imperfect, reflects many of the qualities of the Brazilian State's outlook for the *favela*. Rather than invoking Zweig's hope for a racially democratic future, I embrace his idea that Brazilian society is often dictated by a desire to erase the past, abandon the present, and idealize the future. To analyze this discuss a past image of the future, Stefan Zweig and what he tells about the problems of anticipation, who is allowed to anticipate, and what is anticipated. He claimed that Who visits Brazil doesn't like to leave it. Gringos want to come to Brazil. Change was precipitated by outsiders, even the prisoners were more influential than the natives.

Throughout his writing, Zweig sounds grateful for Brazil, a country that provided him with a personal future that was once cut short by holocaust. Zweig was an Austrian Jew fleeing Nazi Germany, and his writings read like a mix of travelogue and refugee's autobiography. As the world's bestselling author, Brazil's semi-fascist Estado Novo (New State) welcomed Zweig as a cultural asset and a symbol of the country's inclusionary promises. Zweig admittedly knows little of Brazil and often stumbles into a narrative that describes the country as a racial democracy (Freyre 1933) with a "cordial" citizenry (De Holanda 1936). He describes Brazilians as "humans without history" (116), non-violent (120), and domesticated (123). This narrative aligns with racial consciousness movements in Brazil that have been accused of smoothing over Brazil's racist history in an attempt to embrace the country's multi-cultural history (Goldstein 2003). Zweig, for example, avoids a critical discussion of Brazil's internal wars of religion, chattel slavery, and indigenous genocide—or as European colonizers call it, "pacification." He claims that Brazil's military class is a benevolent group that democratically cedes their authority to an emerging middle class (132). Zweig argues that a future political peace depends on the submission of marginalized (i.e., indigenous and afro-descendent) communities to a central state. Zweig described the *favela* as a particular scourge of Brazil's march towards progress, but predicted that they would disappear after being included into a broader democratic society (159). According to Zweig, education, long denied to Brazil's underclasses, promised to create a "fund for the future" (132–33). In this respect, Zweig expressed a hope that the *favela* could educate itself out of existence, eliminating the problems experienced its residents by eliminating the *favela* itself.

Zweig's embrace of this future vision eventually became incommensurable with his own traumatic past and present. After publishing of *Pais do Future*, Zweig established himself in Brazil's imperial city, Petropolis. There, he read reports from World War II Europe and grew increasingly disillusioned with humanity. He wrote his suicide note the same day he posted his final manuscript, an autobiography titled *The World of Yesterday*.[29] This last book focuses on his youth in Prague and details his obliviousness to the growing threat of Nazism. In his suicide note, Zweig wrote of Brazil, "Everyday I learned to love this country more, and I would not have asked to rebuild my life in any other place after the world of my own language sank and was lost to me and my spiritual homeland, Europe, destroyed itself." Further on in his note, Zweig claims to lack the inner resources to reinvent himself in a country of constant reinvention. He ends the note by stating his impatience to arrive in the future.

The Complexo's Future

Zweig's transition from optimism to fatal pessimism mirrors the logical evolution of pacification and digital inclusion in the *favela*. For both pacification and digital inclusion, the Brazilian state initially predicted an idealized future in the *favela* that abandoned considerations for the past and present. Residents of the Complexo, however, had a more nuanced idea of the future that did recognize past failures and traumas as essential to any form of progress.

In chapter one of this dissertation, I describe the prescriptive arguments technology companies and policymakers have made about digital disruption. Proponents of digital disruption promote the idea that technology can reshape society for the better by challenging

[29] Throughout the book and his life, Zweig expressed a feeling of restless boredom and liberation from the shackles of polite society.

historical ways of knowing. By suspending belief in a more certain future, *favela* residents created an inclusionary discursive space, both online and offline, where the predictions of policymakers were as credible as the predictions of favela residents. For example, five years after pacification, a group of former *favela* residents protested the state's failure to fulfill subsequent promises of public housing. While documenting a protest concerning the de-occupation, two notable activists were arrested. In the immediate outcry, Raull, one of the Complexo's most notable activists, posted this message on social media: "In a utopic future, our goal will not be to register a war, because this would be only visible through photo and text, but to tattoo this violence in our eyes, in our thought and soul. Today was difficult, but we are together family" (Raull Santiago 2016).[30] As Raull suggests, memory is often used to conceptualize the present and possible futures (Appadurai 2013; Guyer 2007; Piot 2010). Protest over past and present injustices became a central feature of the Complexo's new digital public. Posts like Raull's helped to create a digital public and a social space where citizens could critically imagine a future that acknowledges the past.

This space fulfilled many of the promises relating to pacified citizenship that I discuss in chapter two and desires for a digital utopia that I discuss in chapter three. While policymakers, corporations, and international NGOs as essential products of both pacification and digital inclusion embraced the anti-violence activists, they often found themselves chasing a future without end, pursuing an ideal of a perfect world that they never expected to fully realize. Even

[30] "Que num futuro utópico, nossos rolés não sejam para registrar e tentar amenizar uma GUERRA, pois isso não fica visível apenas em foto ou texto, mas infelizmente, tatuado em nossa retina, no pensamento e na alma.Hoje foi difícil, mas estamos juntos, família."

the Complexo's activists sometimes failed to recognize the significance of their past and present when pushing for a utopic future. Much like historicity threatens the future of policy, the inability of a community movement to fully appreciate their past trauma threatens the ability of activists to sustain legitimate dialogue with the people they hope to represent. For example, during one protest that was organized a few weeks before the Olympic games, marchers carried a coffin that housed a fake Olympic torch. Among the more notable activists participating was the Complexo's preeminent social media activist, Rene Silva. The prop symbolized state abandonment during the international mega event. A few weeks later, Rene was invited to carry the actual Olympic torch. Pictures soon emerged of him smiling and proudly wearing official Olympic merchandise. Hundreds of Complexo residents went online and compared the image of Rene carrying a coffin and the image of Rene carrying the torch that he had symbolically buried weeks earlier. Many in the community, particularly younger residents, expressed outrage over his perceived political opportunism. For many of the youth I spoke with, Rene represented the future of the *favela* and acted as a representative for the community on an international level. For these critics, Rene's participation in an idealized future, one based on a nationalist celebration of sport, was incommensurable with a digital future that embraced *favela* experience.

Critiques of Rene reflected a critical digital pedagogy that I discussed in chapter four. In their effort to achieve a more perfect future, digital inclusion programs encouraged a critical digital pedagogy that asked individuals to use technology as a means to constantly question authority. In their critique of Rene, residents asked if their unofficial spokesperson had allied

with oppressive institutions. These residents suggested that they were still waiting for a future when representatives of their community would not be co-opted by outside forms of authority.

Reflecting on the Complexo's pacified inclusion, I believe that a future must incorporate the past in order to achieve the promise of a sustainable and inclusionary peace in the *favela*. For my informants, there was no consensus on when the future would begin, but they often lamented when the possibilities of a future ended. Pacification, for example, failed to achieve peace, and while it continued as a policy for years, many who lived under its negative effects believed that the policy's goal was untenable. Many of my informants believed that the state's ultimate goal was to suppress the *favela* and keep it marginalized across the past, present, and future. By failing to actively consider the past and present limitations of state authority, a pacified inclusion was opposed to a future defined by critical interpretations of personal experience.

In chapter five and six I describe how the reproduction of images played an important role in challenging aesthetic censorship in the Complexo. For the first time, Complexo residents felt in control of their visual narrative and, despite attempts to appropriate the symbolic capital of image-makers, were able to document their past lives. As opposed to their view of the oppressive politics of pacification, many of my informants believed that *digital technology* offered a future that could embrace the past and present. Whereas pacification often encouraged *favela* residents to divest from the Brazilian State's mission in their community (due to the policy's violence), digital technology continued to encourage personal, professional, and political investment. The information society proved more appealing than the pacified society.

It was only at the end of my research that I realized my informants in the *favela* rarely saw the future as limitless in the same way my middleclass informants from outside of the community did. I highlight this phenomenon in chapter seven, when massive street protests that were organized by digital activists had failed to entice powerful state actors to change the strategies and institutions that caused death in the Complexo. My informants learned to recognize the hidden politics of digital inclusion and the linkages between the state, the media, corporations, and NGOs. This was particularly the case when outside institutions abandoned the Complexo after the Olympics games, during the economic crisis. I found that, despite the growing lack of faith in the State and its partners, faith in the tenets of digital inclusion remained strong. Digital activists continued to view technology as a bulwark against the machinations of the police and city planners who would undoubtedly return in the future with new and oppressive plans for the community.

In this sense, digital inclusion, online activism, and critical discourse became a way of embodying the future while remaining conscious of the past. My informants understood that negative aspects of the past would continue into the future, but now, with digital technology, they could collectively challenge oppression. Even when pacification failed and activists began to lose their government and corporate funding, many in the Complexo believed that digital technology would make the world better. Without forgetting the struggles of yesterday, the quest for a digital utopia remained possible.

The hidden politics of digital reproduction, a discourse of technological inclusion that disguises other more oppressive conditions in the Complexo, will continue to present conceptual problems for anthropologists going into the future. I believe this problem will play

out as indicated by anthropologists such as William Mazzarella (2010), who do not seek to describe digital technology as positive or negative, but rather as transformative, disruptive, and, as I argue throughout the dissertation, socially reproductive. For the Complexo, what will be reproduced is a historically negative condition informed by violence, oppression, and marginality. Concepts such as entrepreneurship and critical digital pedagogy, although sometimes flawed and touched by classed notions of economic participation, give hope to marginalized communities like the Complexo and inspire ethnographers and the digital activists of the Complexo to remain optimistic. This optimism, I believe, will not be maintained by the state's institutions or in an elitist civil society, but rather by individuals who remember the world of yesterday and understand that Brazil will always be the country of the future.

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