EVICTIONS IN THE SHADOWS OF THE STADIUMS: SPACE AND RESISTANCE AT RIO 2016

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A nossa comunidade gerou uma grande resistência,
Que através da persistência conseguimos várias influências,
Com a ajuda de Deus alçamos vôos bem distantes,
Graças aos apoiadores e a nossa luta sempre constante
Onde a nossa relação foi sincera e de muito respeito,
Cada um fazendo o que podia dentro de suas limitações
Todos foram muito importantes no processo das remoções
Quando menos se acreditava a Vila ressurgia
Perdemos várias batalhas mas a guerra persistia.

Our Community generated a great resistance
Through persistence we achieved great influence
With God's help we reached great distances
Thanks to our supporters and our constant struggle
With a sincere and respectful relationship
With each one doing their best
All were very important in the process of evictions
When few believed the Vila resurged
We lost many battles but the war persisted

Luiz Cláudio Silva
Resident of Vila Autódromo

Abstract

This thesis explores the resistance to eviction of the Vila Autódromo favela, an informal community adjacent to the Rio 2016 Olympic park. The thesis explores how the space and place of the favela were constructed by residents and supporters to undermine the justification for evictions by providing an alternative discourse of informal communities to the stereotyped vision of slums. Understanding these communities and their struggle for rights is of fundamental importance given the current political turmoil in Brazil which threatens to remove the few rights that have been won through previous struggles. The ethnographic approach taken in this thesis provides close, in-depth discussion of the contentious politics around the Rio 2016 Olympic Games, specifically related to evictions in Vila Autódromo. The year-long period of fieldwork was crucial to fully understand the complexity and context of contentious politics in Rio.

This thesis makes contributions across a number of fields. Firstly, the thesis provides the first ethnographic examination of protest at the sport mega-events, building on the limited research linking sport and social movements. I also address the issues of rights at the Olympic Games, making a timely contribution to this debate given the International Olympic Committee's recent commitment to human rights in host cities. Through discussing the rights claimed by residents and the actions of the city, we see rights are constructed by governments and elites, often excluding marginalised groups from justice. Further, the thesis makes contributions to spatial theory, critiquing the inherent power Lefebvre assigns to the state in constructing urban space based on the different power dynamics which exist in informal communities. Building on this, I also argue that social movements not only use space, but actively construct and produce space. This approach to integrating spatial theory with theories of contentious politics goes beyond many simplistic analyses of social movements and space which examine the spaces movements use to protest. Through liminal events in this constructed space, activists and residents generated a strong sense of the place of the favela which supported an alternative discourse of favela, undermining justifications for eviction. I also discuss the process

of negotiation with journalists, often ignored within framing theory, by which activists generated sympathetic coverage of their struggle, spreading the sense of place around the world.

Keywords: resistance; space; place; discourse; informal communities; rights; Rio 2016

Table of Contents

List of Figures

Acknowledgements

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Declaration

I declare that the research contained in this thesis, unless otherwise formally indicated within the text, is the original work of the author. The thesis has not been previously submitted to this or any other university for a degree, and does not incorporate any material already submitted for a degree.

Signed:

Dated:

Chapter 1: Introduction

> I am glad I fought against the Olympic development even though I lost a great deal. Eviction was the worst experience of my life. It wore me down. The process left us feeling violated and marginalised. They treated families like trash that had to be removed. Faced with such cruelty, most residents gave in. It's a lot easier to sell your rights than to claim them. But I am very stubborn. When rights are not respected, I believe you have to fight to defend them (Penha Macena 2017).

From the departure lounge of London Heathrow airport I gaze out to the plane which will carry me further from home than I have ever been before, on my first venture out of Europe. On this cold night in September 2015, I'm a volatile mix of emotions: nervous, excited, worried and impatient. Nervous and worried because I've never lived outside the UK before, let alone in a country which contains 19 of the world's 50 most dangerous cities (Woody 2017). I've had sleepless nights in the past few weeks, worrying about whether I might die during this year in Rio de Janeiro. But I'm also excited to get on the ground and start the next phase of my doctoral study, impatient to get some data to work with. The last few months of wrangling to get a visa and planning my fieldwork have left me desperate to start getting to know the city and its people.

This thesis tells the story of the Vila Autódromo favela, an informal community located next to the Olympic park, which resisted eviction in the years leading up to the Rio 2016 Olympic Games. It details how residents and their supporters organised to stop the evictions and challenge the municipal government policy of favela removals, focusing particularly on the media coverage the community generated. In particular, they sought to challenge dominant ideas about what favelas are and why these places are marginalised. While the thesis draws on this specific case, the questions it addresses have wider implications for urban space and the power relations through which it is (re)constructed. Indeed, those resisting

evictions in Vila Autódromo saw that favela as symbolic of informal communities across the city, explicitly fighting not just for this favela, but for all favelas. While this high-profile conflict starkly exposed these contradictions in the urban fabric of Rio de Janeiro as it hosted the Olympic Games, the tensions between capital and people which underpin the conflict in this community are present in cities all around the world.

This ethnographic thesis focuses on protest at the Rio 2016 Olympic Games. It is written as an ethnography, weaving my experiences throughout the thesis to bring abstract theoretical concepts to life and stimulate the imagination. The task of writing ethnographically "is to inscribe a present – to convey in words 'what it is like' to be somewhere" (Geertz 1988: 143) at a particular moment. As Geertz (1988) himself acknowledges, we can only ever utterly fail in this impossible task, but the purpose of ethnographic writing is to transport you, the reader, into the field to learn what life is like. The decision to present the research in this way was taken for a variety of reasons, which will be fully discussed in the methodology chapter. To explain it briefly and bluntly, writing ethnographically is the only way to do justice to the data.

This research is also explicitly and unapologetically partisan. This has important implications for the nature of knowledge produced and the scientific endeavour. These implications, however, are not to be shied away from, but to be embraced. As Becker (1967: 239) poses it "the question is not whether we will take sides, since we inevitably will, but rather whose side are we on?" Becker's (1967) ensuing call for an underdog sociology is however too simplistic, as who deserves the underdog label in any given scenario is in itself a value judgement. Following McDonald (2002) and Gouldner (1968; 1973), I argue that this taking of sides must be underpinned by a set of values, allowing the reader to understand why the sides have been chosen. These values and the process of choosing sides must be explained to the reader and as such are discussed in the latter sections of the methodology and in the epilogue. For now, it is suffice to say that the guiding principles by which I, as a researcher

and an individual, choose sides are informed by issues of social justice, equality and democracy.

Drawing on ideas from a variety of academic disciplines, including anthropology, political science and human geography, this sociological research discusses how space was mobilised as a resource and a site of political contestation in the removal of a community close to the Olympic park. Put simply, I argue that this contention was played out spatially and, with a great deal of press coverage, the conflict over one favela became emblematic of informal communities across Rio, Brazil and beyond. In this context, the outcome of this episode of contention raises numerous questions about the power of the state and the rights of citizens in contemporary Brazil.

My nerves were partly due to my lack of prior experience of Brazil, having never been to the country before. My interest in Brazil came initially when Rio de Janeiro was awarded the 2016 Olympic Games and I watched news coverage as a young sports fan, marvelling at the beautiful sights of the city, from Christ the Redeemer and Sugarloaf Mountain to the beaches of Copacabana and Ipanema. A few years later, two years into studying an undergraduate degree in the sociology of sport, I recall my parents asking if I wanted to go to the London 2012 Games. I refused, partly because I was aware of some of the issues, but mostly because if I was going to go to an Olympic Games in my life I wanted to go somewhere more exotic than London. At that time, even as I said I'd rather go to the Rio Olympics, I never dreamed that I would get the opportunity to do so.

That opportunity presented itself in the form of a fully-funded PhD scholarship at the University of Brighton advertised whilst I was applying for doctoral positions in the sociology of sport. While I had developed my own research project for other applications, upon seeing this project advertised I was immediately enthralled. Not only would I be able to complete a PhD at a university with a reputation for the kind of critical sociology I was interested in, but I'd have the chance to live abroad in the process. With the critical perspective I had been armed with during my

undergraduate studies, I knew the Olympics were a problematic event, but the avid sports fan within me still believed the event brought some positive legacies to host cities.

Reading the evidence about the impact of the event on host cities in detail quickly disabused me of that notion. I make no apology for being loud and forthright in my criticisms of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and their apparently glittering event as these criticisms are informed by a detailed examination of the evidence. In many ways, the established fact that the Games damage host cities underpins this thesis (see Lenskyj 2008; Boykoff 2013; chapter 2 of this thesis). Taking this as read, this project focuses instead on what can be done about this problem: how can people in host cities contest the negative impacts of the mega-event? Is it possible to stop these negative impacts? Can the Olympics be reformed? If so, how? These are the questions I travelled across the world to better understand.

In December 2014, the IOC outlined their response to the myriad issues dogging the Games. Agenda 2020 outlined forty recommendations to transform the Olympic Games and make it fit for the 21st Century. These recommendations barely scratched the surface of the impact the Games have on host cities, more concerned with building a bigger audience for the spectacle, acting (or giving the appearance of doing so) on doping and protecting the IOC's reputation as global do-gooders. Even as the IOC declared their intention to "foster dialogue with society" (IOC 2014), Brazilian police stocked up on tear gas and riot gear (Segalla 2015). Agenda 2020 has nothing to say about the impact of the Games on host cities apart from a few woolly, unaccountable sentences about ensuring legacy and sustainability. The whole project of reform is well summed up by Olympics scholar Jules Boykoff (2016: 241) as "baby steps where bold strides are required".

One such bold stride, arguably, came after the Rio Games, with the announcement in February 2017 that the IOC's new Host City Contract would include a clause safeguarding human rights in Olympic cities (Etchells 2017). Major human rights

groups including Amnesty International and Terre des Hommes have been lobbying the IOC to insert such a clause in the Host City Contract for several years. People in cities around the world seem to be waking up to the fact that hosting the Games harm cities, with numerous successful grassroots campaigns against Olympic bids in recent years (see Dempsey and Zimbalist 2017). The 2022 Winter Games came down to a choice between Almaty and Beijing, both cities run by autocratic governments with a track record of human rights abuses (Boykoff 2015). Given that this research focuses on the resistance to violations of rights in an Olympic host city, the thesis has important and timely contributions to make to the debate around rights and mega-events.

This work, however, is not only relevant to the study of the Olympic Games and mega-events. While I set out for Brazil with the questions outlined above, once there I was confronted with a new, complex reality. New questions emerged. What are favelas? Why are favelas treated so poorly by the authorities? What are housing rights? Who defines rights? How are these communities resisting eviction? How has the story of one small favela made its way into international news headlines? How do activists work with journalists to get sympathetic press coverage? These questions hold relevance far wider than the Olympic Games, from resistance movements claiming rights, through informal communities across the world, to press coverage of social movement organising.

While the subjects discussed in this thesis are relevant beyond Rio de Janeiro and Brazil, it is important to understand the context in which the events discussed here took place. The following section provides a brief history of the city and country before discussing the story of the Vila Autódromo favela in detail. Finally, at the conclusion of this introductory chapter, I outline how the thesis develops in a chapter-by chapter summary.

A brief history of Rio de Janeiro and Brazil

> I hope the next country to accept the Olympics first consults its people. No one here was asked what they thought. I did not even know that my country had signed up as a host. It was shoved down our throats, and that is wrong (Penha Macena 2017).

Tom Jobim, the famed composer of *The Girl from Ipanema* after whom Rio de Janeiro's international airport is named, is oft-quoted as saying that "Brazil is not for beginners". A vast, complex country riven with intricacies and contradictions; understanding the fifth largest nation on earth would take a lifetime. Here, I intend to plot a brief history of Rio de Janeiro and Brazil, exploring the context in which this research occurred. Inevitably, such a brief review will leave out interesting and important developments in Brazilian history, but to write a full historical account would take far more than a thesis, let alone a section of the introduction. Here then, I take a selective history of the city and country, drawing particularly on events that provide important context for the present research. This history is built from historical literature and analysis, but also from stories I heard during fieldwork, from favela residents, middle-class Brazilians and museum guides.

Rio de Janeiro was founded by Portuguese settlers in 1565, becoming an important port and administrative centre in the Brazilian colony. Throughout the colonial period and beyond, over one million slaves were disembarked in Rio de Janeiro, making it the busiest slave port in the history of the world, according to data from the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database (Voyages Database 2013). These slaves were the powerhouse of the colonial economy which plundered the natural resources of the new world to be sent back to Portugal, with little investment in Brazil (Galeano 1973). After 1808, when the Portuguese royal family fled Lisbon prior to Napoleon's invasion of the city transferring the court to Rio under escort from the British navy, this wealth was also transferred to Britain under preferential trading conditions.

Rio de Janeiro, at this point, became capital of not only Brazil, but the entire Portuguese empire, now reconstituted as the United Kingdom of Portugal, Brazil and the Algarves, thereby setting the colony on equal footing with the metropolis (Donghi 1993). When King João VI returned to the metropolis in 1821, the Portuguese demanded that Brazil return to its former status as colony. João's son and heir, Pedro, had remained in Brazil and declared independence from Portugal on 7 September 1822, becoming the first emperor of the Empire of Brazil. His monarchic legitimacy held Brazil together, in contrast to the Spanish colonies gaining independence in the same period which split into several different nations (Donghi 1993).

Slavery remained crucial for the economy of the newly formed Brazilian empire until abolition in the late 17th Century. Under pressure from the British government, Emperor Pedro II banned slavery throughout Brazil. The law was poorly enforced, however, leading to accusations that slavery was only abolished 'for the English to see', becoming a common phrase used to describe a plethora of government policies aimed at pleasing foreigners, often at the expense of Brazil (see Florentino 2012). The hosting of the Olympic Games is a case in point, as Robertson (2016a) forcefully argues. Shortly after the abolition of slavery, Pedro II was deposed in a coup, with the military instituting the first Republic of Brazil, nominally a democracy but controlled by Brazil's wealthy landowners.

In 1897, a conflict was underway in Bahia, a province in North-eastern Brazil, between the newly formed Brazilian republic and a small community accused of supporting the monarchy. The oligarchic republic wanted to crush the settlement of Canudos for their apparent disregard for the new nation-state. To raise an army, the Brazilian government promised local peasants that if they fought for the state they would be rewarded with lands in the capital, Rio de Janeiro. When the victorious soldiers arrived in Rio to claim their reward, they found that there was no land for them. Unwilling to be turned away, they squatted outside the Ministry of War before being told to move to a nearby hill, which they called Morro da Favela (Hill of the Favela), referencing a thorny and extremely durable plant found in the

Canudos region. Over a century later, that squatter settlement remains on the hill and favela has become a generic term for such communities. This is a commonly told tale of how the first favela came into being and while there may well be factual inaccuracies and mistruths, key elements of what a favela is are brought out through this story: self-built neighbourhoods resulting from an unmet need for housing. The state prioritises the economy and trading relations with Europe and the USA over ensuring housing is provided to their poorest citizens (Galeano 1973).

The oligarchic first republic lasted until 1930, with the government reforming Rio de Janeiro in the image of the great European capitals, particularly Paris. This involved several renovation projects in the downtown area which resulted in the removal of *cortiços*, which traditionally housed the poor. Displaced residents moved to the new settlements on the hills around the downtown area – the favelas. In 1930, a military coup installed Getúlio Vargas as president. His dictatorship, fervently anti-communist, attempted to industrialise and modernise Brazil (Holston 2008). Styled as the New State, Vargas' government promoted a form of economic nationalism, stimulating industry and distributing rights to workers. Alongside this, the government now focused on the previously ignored favelas, seen to be areas of criminality and uncleanliness, as a blight to be removed from their cities. Favelas were made illegal by decree, resulting in the removal of numerous favelas and *favelados*[1] by force (Rial y Costas 2011). While Vargas could be described as a fascist ideologically, he aligned Brazil with the allies during the Second World War, in part due to threats of invasion by the US navy.

After the war, a bloodless coup deposed Vargas and instituted democratic reforms, creating the second Republic of Brazil. Successive elected governments invested in development plans, including moving the capital from Rio de Janeiro to the purpose-built Brasília in 1960 in an attempt to spread investment beyond the wealthy southern cities. Broadly speaking, the removal of favelas that began under the New State continued. With the economic nationalism pursued by successive

[1] Those who live in favelas

governments increasingly unpopular among Brazil's middle class, policies seeking to empower the working and peasant classes were pursued. Amid wider fears of communism spreading to Latin America, a US-backed coup in 1964 deposed the democratically elected president and installed a military junta.

The military government invested in further industrialization, now without the emphasis Vargas had always placed on workers' rights in the New State period. Opposition to the government was met with brutal force, with kidnappings and torture common for political activists, with rights unequally distributed across Brazil and providing little protection for the poorest Brazilians (Holston 2008). The early years of the military government saw rapid development, known as the Brazilian economic "miracle". But while the middle class reaped the benefits of authoritarian rule, disappearances, torture and paramilitary death squads became a fact of life for the Brazilian poor (Scheper-Hughes 1992). With political groups banned, local church groups became centres of political organising, espousing a Marxist interpretation Christianity known as liberation theology (Daudelin and Hewitt 1995). Brazil's largest media conglomerate, Globo, formed a symbiotic relationship with the military government, with the government investing in telecommunications infrastructure to allow Globo to broadcast its pro-government message across Brazil, becoming the voice of the nation (Herz 1986). Globo remains the dominant media conglomerate in Brazil, with a market share of around 80% and a strongly right-wing editorial line (Van Dijk 2017).

After taking control of government in the 1960's, the military regime proceeded with a "policy of massive eradication of the *favelados* from their existing dwellings and their removal to "embryo-houses" and apartments in the periphery of the city" (Portes 1979). Essentially, the policy attempted to destroy favelas while moving residents to government-built housing on cheaper, sparsely populated land to the west of the city. Many of those removed were resettled in the *Cidade de Deus* housing development, which later grew into an informal community (Dimitriadou et al. 2013). This period was marked by the callous brutality of the state towards the

poor, particularly from the military police, with scant regard for human rights (Scheper-Hughes 1992). Rights were reserved for the wealthy elite (Holston 2008).

Elections continued under the military government, with the official opposition, the MDB (Brazilian Democratic Movement) routinely excluded from government. The strength of the dictatorship waned in the late 1970's as newly formed unions went on strike, led by Luiz Inácio da Silva, commonly known as Lula. A gradual process of redemocratisation began in the 1980's, known as the *abertura*, or opening. The PMDB, the party formed from the MDB, won the 1985 presidential elections and a new constitution was written from scratch. Approved in 1988, the new constitution provided an egalitarian framework for the new republic, as well as enshrining constitutional protections against the possibility of a military coup. Following the return of democracy, favela removals dropped sharply, partly due to the sheer size of favela residents as a voting bloc (Perlman 2010) and partly due to the egalitarian laws of the 1988 constitution (Earle 2012).

Mirroring developments across the continent in the late 20th Century, redemocratisation occurred in tandem with a blossoming of social movement organising (Donghi 1993; Gohn 2009). Unions continued to campaign for workers' rights while peasant's groups like the Landless Workers' Movement (MST) formed to push for agrarian reforms, campaigning for the rights of the rural poor. Similar movements sprang up in Brazil's many cities to fight for housing rights, while feminist and black movements formed to campaign against discrimination. The national government pursued a broadly neoliberal agenda, attempting to attract foreign investment by loosening various regulations (Mollo and Saad-Filho 2006). Lula, now leader of the left-wing Worker's Party, repeatedly stood for president, making successive gains until winning office in the 2002 election.

While some on the left criticized Lula in the early years of his presidency for not breaking decisively with neoliberal doctrine (Petras and Veltmeyer 2005; Mollo and Saad-Filho 2006), Brazil's economic success in the first decade of the 21st Century enabled Lula to invest heavily (Grugel and Riggirozzi 2012; Schmalz and Ebenau

2012). While infrastructure spending strengthened economic performance, welfare programmes lifted millions of Brazilians out of poverty (Fortes 2009). Favelas benefited from this economic growth, as well as from new legislation guaranteeing housing rights (see Earle 2012; chapter 7 of this thesis). As part of the rising group of BRIC nations, Brazilian foreign policy aimed to gain a permanent seat on the UN Security Council, with Brazil presented as a voice for the Third World[2] (Resende 2010). By hosting mega-events like the Pan-American Games of 2007 (partly serving to prove that Brazil could host major events), the 2014 FIFA World Cup and the 2016 Olympic Games, Lula sought to launch Brazil as a major player in international relations (Resende 2010; Clift and Andrews 2012). Despite a major corruption scandal during his time as president, Lula left office as what the then US president Barack Obama described as 'the most popular politician on earth', with record high approval ratings. Lula's protégé and successor, Dilma Rousseff, sought to continue along similar lines, albeit with less political nous and charisma than Lula.

During the Confederations Cup of 2013, a test event for the FIFA World Cup due to be held the following year, mass mobilisations erupted across Brazil, threatening to spoil Brazil's moment on the global stage. What began as a protest over public transport fares in São Paulo soon became a much more amorphous mobilisation, as Holston (2014) summarises:

> In short, they were splintered, anarchic, unrepresentative, unverifiable, ungrateful, and apolitical. Yet, by mid-June, more than a million people were participating in street demonstrations, clearly mobilized by something rather than nothing (Holston 2014: 887).

These peaceful protests provoked a violent reaction from the Military Police in an attempt to ensure the protests did not spoil Brazil's moment on the world stage. In doing so, 'police acted in accordance with their military training, *a form of action rarely seen by those living outside of the favelas*' (Gutterres 2014: 904 emphasis

[2] I use the term Third World here as the Security Council is made up of the opposing powers from the Cold War, with no representation for the non-aligned nations of the Third World.

added). Thus, the middle classes who were previously sheltered from the realities of life for the poorest Brazilians were exposed to the brutality of the police force, engendering a mood of indignation across the country.

This mobilisation morphed into a movement against corruption concurrent with Operation *Lava Jato* (Van Dijk 2017), a Federal Police investigation centred on contracts awarded by the state oil company, Petrobras. By allowing plea bargains for those involved, the investigation became much wider, drawing in a vast swathe of Brazil's political and economic elite (see Watts 2017). This corruption was particularly evident in the construction industry, a major sector of the Brazilian economy. Protests at the 2014 World Cup, while significantly smaller than those in 2013, linked corruption at FIFA to this ongoing scandal, particularly with regard to the stadium construction contracts (Gaffney 2016).

As Operation *Lava Jato* began to have clear political implications, the anti-corruption movement soon became partisan, with significant pressure on President Rousseff, who had been CEO of Petrobras at the time of the scandal. Her supporters pointed out that she was one of the few major politicians who was not being investigated in the probe, unlike many of her critics. The Speaker in Congress, Eduardo Cunha, decried the corruption of the government and pushed for Rousseff's impeachment in what journalist Mauricio Savarese (2015) described as "a penalty searching for a crime". Rousseff, who maintains her innocence, was removed from government in what many on the left describe as a coup, with a right-wing government led by Michel Temer installed in her place pursuing hugely unpopular, regressive policies. Within this programme is a major land reform which intends to make it easier to give legal title to favela residents: while at face value this may appear to reinforce housing rights, evidence suggests it will accelerate gentrification, pushing low income residents away from urban centres (Healy 2017). At the time of writing (July 2017), the new President's approval rating languishes in low single digits as corruption allegations continue at the highest level of government, including against the President himself. Eduardo Cunha has since been jailed for 15 years on corruption charges.

As we can see from this brief foray into the history of Brazil and Rio de Janeiro, throughout history the poor have been mistreated, with the removal of favelas particularly common. The poorest in society have been routinely marginalised by economic elites, with rights applied in an inegalitarian fashion across the country (Holston 2008). Alongside this, a strong culture of social movement organising has developed, particularly evident during periods of democracy but also during period of dictatorship, albeit less openly as a result of political repression. While progress towards an open democratic society has been made over recent centuries, it is uneven, with advancements in democracy and rights often (at least partially) reversed by later changes in government. In this context, the impeachment of Dilma Rousseff during the 2016 Paralympic Games takes on a particularly worrying quality, as discussed in chapter 7.

Vila Autódromo: a history of resistance

> There used to be 650 families here. Today, there are 20. Keeping even those was a hard-fought battle. We made history. We set an example as the first families to resist the Olympics. Though there are not many of us and our old homes were demolished and replaced, it was a big victory. We overcame powerful interests to defend our right to remain in our neighbourhood (Penha Macena 2017).

This thesis focuses on the resistance to eviction of the Vila Autódromo favela, adjacent to the main Olympic Park in Barra da Tijuca. One consequence of Rio's hosting of the Olympic Games is that favela removals, rare since redemocratisation, have returned with significant force (Magalhães 2013; Faulhaber and Azevedo 2015). Here I will provide a history of the particular community in question, from its founding in the 1960's up to the Rio 2016 Olympic Games. Inevitably, this is a selective history, looking back and picking out the points relevant to the discussions contained in the thesis, ignoring some events while heavily emphasising others. This is formed from a synthesis of stories I was told by residents and activists and, in

the latter stages of this brief history, my own experiences in the community, as well as published materials from both activist and media sources (see Watts 2015; Mendes 2016; AMPVA 2016; RioOnWatch 2016a).

Figure 1.1: Vila Autódromo sits close to the middle-class neighbourhood of Barra da Tijuca. Map by Débora Zukeran.

Vila Autódromo was founded in the 1960's as a fishing community on the banks of Jacarepaguá lagoon, squeezed between the lagoon and the Nelson Piquet racetrack from which the favela takes its name. The racetrack has since been demolished, with the Olympic park constructed in its place (see Figure 1.1). The sign at the entrance to the favela states that it has been "a peaceful and orderly community since 1967". At that time, the area was sparsely populated with just a few buildings in the vicinity, in part due to the significant distance from the city centre. More residents came to build their lives in the community, attracted by the safety and the space, allowing for sizeable homes with yards. As Barra da Tijuca, the neighbourhood across the lagoon, expanded in the 1970's and 1980's construction workers settled in Vila Autódromo, enlarging the community further.

This expansion of Barra da Tijuca during this period is, fundamentally, what threatens residents of Vila Autódromo. Rio de Janeiro is split into four zones: downtown and West, North and South zones, as can be seen in Figure 1.2. Broadly speaking, the Downtown area is the commercial centre of the city, with economic

activity also spreading into the middle-class, touristic South Zone. The North Zone is densely populated with mostly working-class Brazilians, as is the *Baixada Fluminense*, as the suburban region to the north of the city limits is known. The West Zone is also home to mostly working-class Brazilians, but is more sparsely populated, in part due to the significant distance to the economic centre of the city. While Barra da Tijuca is technically part of the West Zone, many of its middle-class residents prefer to think of Barra as its own zone, or as an extension of the South Zone.

Figure 1.2: Barra da Tijuca sits to the West of the economic centre of the city in the Downtown and South Zones. Map by Débora Zukeran.

The focus of urban expansion in the 1970's and 1980's shifted westwards from Rio's wealthy South Zone to Barra da Tijuca, with development principally designed for the middle and upper classes. The condominiums and gated communities of Barra, as it is commonly known, are distinctly removed from the rest of the city, more closely resembling a North American city built around the automobile than the vibrant sociable streets of the rest of Rio de Janeiro. Much of this development was guided by Carlos Carvalho, a white Brazilian real estate developer who has invested heavily in the area since 1973 (Watts 2015). His company, Carvalho Hosken, built many of these new condominiums and gated communities, making Carlos one of the richest men in Brazil.

As the value of land around Vila Autódromo grew, threats of eviction began. The favela not only took up space on valuable land, but also dragged down the value of nearby land and buildings. In 1993, the then Mayor César Maia evicted several favelas in the area, arguing they caused environmental damage (despite the fact that the lagoon was being heavily polluted by the construction works). Maia attempted to remove Vila Autódromo, but was stopped when the Governor of the State of Rio de Janeiro, which owned the land on which the community had been built, granted residents a lease to the land. This lease was extended to 99 years in 1996 by the Governor. Maia's eviction attempt had been overseen by an ambitious young politician who had recently been appointed Deputy Mayor for the region. Irritated by this setback, the Deputy Mayor could apparently be heard saying "if I don't destroy Vila Autódromo I will dress up as a Baiana" (Mantelli et al. n.d.), a traditional old black woman common in carnival parades. Clearly, the fight against eviction was not yet over. That ambitious young Deputy Mayor, a young, clean cut white guy from Rio's South Zone by the name of Eduardo Paes, went on to serve as Mayor of Rio de Janeiro from 2009-2016, overseeing Rio's transformation into the Olympic city and the eviction of hundreds of families from Vila Autódromo, as well as thousands more across the city.

In the years that followed this failed eviction attempt, life was by no means secure for Vila Autódromo's residents. The Residents' Association, formed in 1986 to promote community interests, continued to fight for greater legal protections for residents – such Associations are common in favelas across the city. As a result, the community was designated a Special Zone of Social Interest in 2004, obliging the Municipal Government to provide services such as refuse collection and mail delivery, as well as a plan for improving the community. This legal victory was enabled by legislation passed by Lula's Worker's Party Federal government. This made Vila Autódromo one of the most strongly protected favelas in Rio, with significant legal rights alongside a well organised Residents' Association. When Rio hosted the 2007 Pan-American Games, seen as a test of Rio's hosting ability, Vila Autódromo successfully resisted eviction attempts with the support of activists across the city (Gaffney 2016).

In 2009, a decision made thousands of miles away changed the course of the favela's future. In Copenhagen, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) awarded Rio de Janeiro the right to host the 2016 Olympic Games, with the main Olympic park to be built in Barra da Tijuca, on the site of the Nelson Piquet racetrack. At the very least, part of Vila Autódromo would be removed, if not the entire community. An access road into the Olympic park would cut through the favela and those homes on the banks of the lagoon would be removed for environmental remediation. Others would be removed for the widening of roads and the construction of a new Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) line. Nevertheless, the finalised design for the Olympic park maintained much of the community. As one resident, Amanda, described it to a group of visitors from Amnesty International: "with the Olympics, the government started to remove Vila Autódromo.

Over the following years, the municipal government identified those residents who wanted to leave, those who could be persuaded to leave, and those who had no interest in leaving. This was undertaken through a painstaking campaign of knocking on residents' doors, pressuring them to sign up for housing in the nearby Parque Carioca housing complex. In the background of the offer of alternative housing was the implicit and unspoken threat that the entire community would be removed and residents would be left with nothing. Alongside this, residents collaborated with urban planners at the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro and the Federal Fluminense University to create the Popular Plan for Vila Autódromo (AMPVA 2012). This plan "affirms the right and the possibility of permanence for the community in the current area and rejects the involuntary removal of any resident" (AMPVA 2012: 11).

During this time, Vila Autódromo residents were linking up with other favelas across the city threatened with eviction, as well as the Comitê Popular, an umbrella group bringing together different groups protesting about mega-events in the city. This led to several protests against evictions of Vila Autódromo and other favelas, as well as documentation of human rights abuses in the Comitê Popular's dossiers

on the subject (see Comitê Popular 2015). In August 2013, Paes announced a change of course, committing to fair compensation and promising that those who wished to stay could stay (RioOnWatch 2013). Several months later, a small group of around twenty residents protested outside City Hall in favour of removal, claiming that the community wanted to move to the Parque Carioca complex. A week later, around a hundred residents protested against removals outside City Hall, claiming that the smaller protest the previous week had been planned by the municipal government to legitimise removals. One activist explained to me that there had been a small group of residents who wished to leave and that the Residents' Association had decided to only represent those who wished to stay, explaining the divisions.

At the end of 2013, the Popular Plan won the Deutsche Bank Urban Age Award, created in partnership with the London School of Economics. Alongside the US$80,000 prize money, this award added greater credence to notion that the community could remain on the land, co-existing with the Olympic park. Throughout these protests against eviction, Rio's public defenders had been working with the community to defend their legal rights to the land and numerous residents had accepted offers of compensation or alternative housing and left the community. By mid-2014, many residents were in negotiations with the municipal government, but nearly 200 families remained steadfast in their desire to remain in the community (Comitê Popular 2014). In early 2015, as Figure 1.3 shows, the favela still retained much of its original physical character, with relatively few demolitions actually completed.

Photograph removed for copyright purposes.

Image available at: https://www.gettyimages.co.uk/license/464338452

Figure 1.3: Vila Autódromo before demolitions began in earnest. February 2015. Photo by Mario Tama.

In March, the municipal government announced eminent domain orders marking 58 families for eviction – essentially forcing evictions through the courts. Demolitions become a regular occurrence in the favela, sometimes with little warning for the inhabitants of the homes. The reasons for these evictions constantly shifted from providing space for an access road, to environmental remediation works, to clearing space for a hotel. The commonly held belief by residents and activists was the removals were occurring to clear the apparent eyesore of the favela from the margins of the Olympic park. In June 2015, an attempted demolition led to an altercation with police, leaving several residents injured and attracting global media attention. Key figures, including residents' association president Augusto[3] and long-time activist Luana, are evicted in the months that follow. With evictions proceeding despite the legal efforts of public defenders, residents and activists develop new strategies of resistance through attracting press attention, holding a campaign of social events in the favela starting in response to the violence in June.

[3] The names of all those with whom I interacted in this research have been replaced by pseudonyms.

Perhaps the most egregious eviction was that of Luiza, who was evicted in October 2015, a few weeks before I arrived in Rio de Janeiro. She had left her home early in the morning for a medical appointment and returned to find her home reduced to rubble. She was taken to a storage facility where her belongings had been taken, although many items were missing including money she had saved. She was told that the storage space was needed and she had to remove all her belongings immediately. Without any way of transporting her belongings, all she could retrieve was her medication. With no alternative housing arranged, she was taken in by Erika, another resident of Vila Autódromo, until alternative housing was arranged by the municipal government a full six months later.

In early November 2015, I made my first visit to Vila Autódromo. I went with another RioOnWatch volunteer, Barney, to report on a mutirão (work party; see Chapter 7) that had been organised to renovate the children's play area, a week after the community's table tennis table had been destroyed. While I was still getting used to the speed of Brazilian Portuguese and the slang, Barney was an accomplished Portuguese speaker, having studied for years and spent over a year living in Fortaleza, in the Northeast of Brazil. We planned to travel via metro to Del Castilho in the North Zone before taking a bus to Vila Autódromo in the West Zone. Neither of us had used the metro to travel north at the weekend before, so it took us an embarrassingly long time to figure out that its different at weekends, making us late for the planned start time.

When we get to Del Castilho, a bus is already waiting. As we leave the air-conditioned metro we're hit by sweltering heat, forecast to reach over 35 degrees today. We make our way down to the bus and board, paying the driver in cash. The bus is full, with only one seat remaining by a window (Barney has already sat down). I head towards the seat and motion to the black woman sat in the aisle seat, asking her to move along so I can sit down. Instead, she stands up and lets me past – that's odd, I think, as in every other bus I've ever been on, the window seat has been the desirable seat. Why does she want to sit in the aisle? As I sit down, I immediately realise why she didn't want to sit here: the sun is beating down on me

through the windows and there's no air-conditioning. As the bus moves off, the driver mercifully turns on the air-conditioning after clamouring shouts from his passengers.

Looking out the window as we head along the Linha Amarela highway, the city looks different from the high-rise apartment buildings of the South Zone where I live. The houses are small and dirty, with many hidden entirely behind high walls. The Olympic stadium dominates the landscape, but otherwise the view is a mass a low rise housing. These are not favelas, they are the working classes neighbourhoods of the city, but it strikes me that they're not all that dissimilar. We head through a tunnel, under the Tijuca Forest, and as we emerge the view has changed from run-down hovels to run-down condominiums. After we pass Cidade de Deus, the housing complex-turned-favela made famous by the eponymous film, the condominiums get steadily nicer until we reach Barra when, all of a sudden, we're surrounded by glass buildings that look like they were built yesterday. We're surrounded by shopping malls and gated communities. The dusty areas to the side of the road have been replaced with manicured gardens and palm trees. The only clue that all is not well in this oasis of consumer capitalism is the occasional sticker on a telegraph pole with Vila Autódromo's logo and the motto "Rio without removals".

Image removed for copyright purposes.

Image available at Vila Autodromo Facebook page

Figure 1.4: Vila Autódromo logo: Long live Vila Autódromo, Rio without removals. From Vila Autódromo Facebook Page.

A few minutes later, we disembark from the bus at a conference complex called Rio Centro, which must be an ironic name as it's taken us several hours to get here from downtown. After heading inside briefly to try, unsuccessfully. to find something to eat and drink, we make the short walk back to Vila Autódromo. It turns out we should have got off the bus one stop earlier, but walking back is not as simple as it would be when I used to miss the stop on the bus home from school. While only covering a short distance, there were no pavements for us to walk on. We had to cross the busy Avenida Salvador Allende, where construction work was ongoing. We spot the favela on the right ahead of us, behind a thicket, as we walk by the side of the highway. The thicket also concealed a small pool of stagnant, black water which filled our nostrils with a disgusting smell.

Behind the thicket is Vila Autódromo, or more accurately, what's left of it. It's a motley collection of buildings scattered across a fairly small area, perched in front of the looming Olympic construction site. We're currently separated from it by a canal, with a rusty footbridge crossing from the highway into the dusty ground of the favela. Above this bridge is an aerial photograph of the favela in better days with word "Welcome" in Portuguese, English and Spanish. Below, again in three languages, it asserts that this is "a peaceful and orderly community since 1967". There's a bus stop by the thicket, and Barney asks a guy waiting there about the mutirão and he gestured to the favela behind him, telling us to head in and then take a left. As we step onto the rusty bridge it moves and we share an anxious look. Sheet metal makes up the floor of the bridge, and through holes where the rust has eaten through we can see the canal below, seemingly more of a mix of bitumen and shit than water.

Surveying the community ahead of us, there are a few houses and some clearly defined roads, while other land is covered in rubble left from previous demolitions interspersed with trees and other vegetation. As we make our way along the road into the favela, we spot an elderly man sat by the road in a deckchair. Walking up towards him, we pass a house covered in ivy that has huge holes knocked through the walls and a pile of rubble with a bright red sofa perched under a palm tree, clearly a comfy spot in the shade for someone. As we pass the old man we say hello, but he barely looks up as we negotiate our way around a puddle that covers most of the road. We take a few photos, but with neither of us having been here before, we're hesitant to do so: we don't feel unsafe, just rude.

After a minute or so of walking, we come to a clearing that wasn't always a clearing. The rubble on the ground around us makes it clear that this used to be a built up area. Nearby is a burnt out JCB and a rusty shipping container. Barney comments that it looks like a warzone and I can't think of a better way to describe it. Houses are dotted around the community seemingly at random, with rubble-filled gaps where houses previously stood. About half of the 80 or so buildings seem

uninhabited: chunks have been knocked out of the walls to ensure people can't move back in. Graffiti covers the walls and fences as far as we can see – not artistic, but political slogans. The exception to this is directly in front of us: the symbol for women with a fist in the centre, a common feminist design. Barney summarises for me as I struggle to translate all the words, saying it basically all says "fuck the government". To our left, we can see the mutirão under some trees close to a wall that seems to mark the edge of the community.

As we approach, nobody seems to look up from what they're doing. The play area is colourful and full of people, mostly women in their early twenties, most of them white. As Barney starts chatting to them, I spot an activist-researcher I'd met at a Comitê Popular meeting and go speak to him. He tells me that he's been here since 9am, along with some 25 others. All the vibrant colour has been added today, he explains as he rolls light green paint onto the concrete wall separating the favela from the Olympic construction site next door. Most of the people here, he tells me, are university students, brought here to do this as part of a project for an urban studies class. There are more researchers here than residents he laments, jokingly suggesting we could organise a football match for the two sides.

Barney interviews a Black woman who seems to be organising things, asking pre-planned questions he'd drawn from RioOnWatch's extensive contributor's guidelines, before taking her photo with some of the flowers that have been planted in the background. As we continue chatting to people, a young woman comes up to us an asks if we'd like food – Barney, deep in conversation with someone, hadn't heard, so I tapped him on the shoulder and asked "*quer comer?*" (do you want to eat?). Weird – I usually speak to him in English. Actually, come to think of it, I've been struggling to understand when people speak Portuguese to me since I arrived in Brazil a few weeks ago, but I've been managing fine here. Can I speak Portuguese now?

We followed the young woman, whose name is Ana, into the resident's association across the road from the play area where we were served a lunch of chicken and

rice, along with a can of coke, for R$10 (about £2). We grab our drinks from an old fridge in the corner and sit at a long table in the centre of the room to eat, Barney chatting to some of the students. I can follow the conversation, but not quite quickly enough to take part, so I gaze around the room, seeing various certificates and old photos of the favela on the walls and a well-stocked bookcase. This is clearly an important hub of community life.

After lunch, Barney interviewed the lecturer who had brought the students before we made to leave. On our way out, we explored the small favela a little more, taking the photos we'd been hesitant to take when we arrived. While at times the devastation is jaw-dropping, making it hard to understand why people continue to live here, we both agreed that the favela seems like quite a nice, friendly place. Some of the houses, even with the devastation surrounding them, look like quite nice places to live: colourful, spacious and surrounded by nature. It must have been a really nice place before the Olympics came along, we agree as we leave.

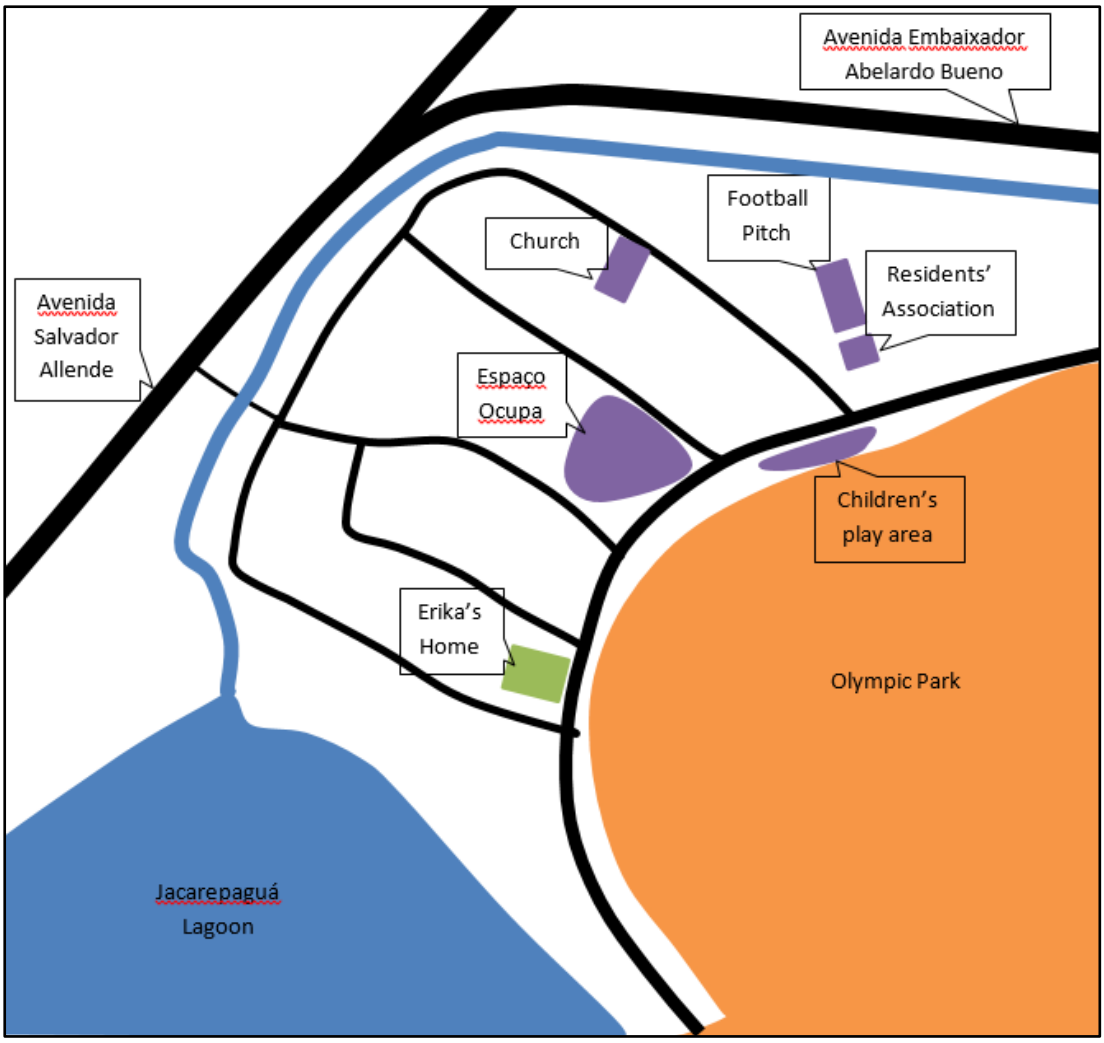

Figure 1.5: Sketch map of Vila Autódromo. Given that demolitions were constant throughout fieldwork, it is impossible to provide a map showing all buildings; instead, this map shows important buildings that will be discussed throughout the thesis.

By this point, demolitions had gutted the community, leaving some fifty buildings scattered across the favela. The constantly shifting nature of the favela makes it impossible to caputre this on a map, but these buildings were scattered around the community, with roughly ten to fifteen percent of the white space in Figure 1.5 occupied by buildings. The buildings are denser in the central part of the community, around the Espaço Ocupa, and particularly sparse along the shore, with just a couple of homes overlooking the lagoon. Events like the renovation of the park, as well as a community event to start building a crèche a few weeks later, used the money won from Deutsche Bank to begin implementing the Popular Plan, displaying a resolute determination that the community would remain. The campaign of social events continued with a cultural festival in November and a

football tournament in December, designed to show that the community still exists and to demonstrate the strength of resistance to evictions.

These events occurred against a backdrop of what was described by one resident as "psychological terrorism" by the municipal government. The rubble from destroyed homes was left lying where it fell, making the favela seem more like a demolition site than a residential area. My first impressions of the community were that it appeared as if a bomb had gone off, the best comparison I could muster was that it seemed like the images of Syria I'd seen on the news. This, residents alleged, was a deliberate attempt to make Vila Autódromo unfit for habitation, pushing people to leave. Several families who left said they did so because the favela had become unsafe for their children because of the demolitions.

Alongside the physical deterioration of the community, services such as mail delivery and refuse collection were interrupted. At times, even the electricity and water supplies were disrupted. When residents complained about the lack of electricity in the community to Light, Rio's electricity provider, they were told that nobody lived there. Throughout these worsening living conditions, municipal government officials continued their attempts to persuade residents to leave. They refused to negotiate with residents as a group, only negotiating with individual families. Throughout these negotiations, the threat of being left with nothing if no agreement was reached lingered in the back of residents' minds. At times, this became explicit, with the Deputy Mayor for the region reportedly telling residents "if you don't leave with love you'll leave in pain" (Salvesen 2015).

The plucky little favela taking on the Olympic behemoth started to gain the attention of journalists arriving in the city to report on Olympic preparations. The Guardian released an interview with Carlos Carvalho, Barra's real estate king, in which he stated his vision for the area around the Olympic park: "a city of the elite… with noble housing, not housing for the poor" (Watts 2015). Time magazine reported on "the impoverished Brazil residents who won't move for the Olympics", concluding that "not everyone has a price" (Gregory 2015). Canadian national

broadcaster CBC reported from Vila Autódromo, noting that "the city has at times responded with force to [residents] who have not responded to enticement" (*The National* 2016). With the Olympics just six months away, residents were still unclear whether they would still be in their homes for the pending Olympic party. Activists knew that the municipal government couldn't leave Vila Autódromo in its current, semi-demolished state during the Games: a choice would have to be made, between removing all remaining residents, potentially illegally, or upgrading the community.

Towards the end of February, the municipal government gained legal clearance to demolish the residents' association building. Over the previous weeks, demolitions had shrunk the community, with the wall between the construction site and the favela moved several times, claiming more space for the Olympic park. In response to the impending demolition, residents asked activists, through Facebook and WhatsApp, to support the community with their presence. Along with some fifteen others, I made my way to the favela in the evening spending the night there, expecting the municipal government to arrive early in the morning to destroy this symbolically important building. Nothing happened that morning and more activists returned to the favela that night, with some forty people staying in Erika's home. During the evening, news spread that the municipal government had also received legal permission to demolish both Erika's and Naiara's homes.

The next morning, residents and their supporters prepared for the worst. They held a candlelit vigil outside the association building at 5am, as well as hanging up banners and posing for photos for the small group of journalists in attendance. At 7am on the dot, a huge force of around 100 municipal guards arrived in the favela, followed by a backhoe to destroy the building. After the demolition papers had been checked over, the demolition began. Some activists (including, a little reluctantly, myself) made a half-hearted attempt to stop the demolition by joining hands, but we were too few and the backhoe simply drove around us. Instead, we gathered with residents and other activists in a circle, chanting our condemnation of the demolitions. Later that day, Naiara's home, which had been cut off inside the

Olympic construction site and also included a Candomblé spiritual centre, was also destroyed.

Long before these buildings were demolished, residents had been planning a relaunch of the Popular Plan for the following weekend. In a show of support to residents, around 200 activists descended on the favela for the relaunch event, where residents, planners, lawyers and politicians spoke about the resistance to evictions. Residents reaffirmed their determination to fight, with leading activist Erika stating that while "the association fell, we have not". An online campaign was launched after the event to demand #urbanizajá (upgrades now), with residents and supporters posting videos of themselves demanding the implementation of the Popular Plan. This campaign was wide-reaching, with several celebrities adding their voices to the pressure on the municipal government (Altino 2016).

The next few weeks were tense, with residents and activists expecting the demolition of Erika's home at any moment. While she was once of the most vocal resisters, hers was also the only remaining home that had been placed under eminent domain in March 2015. The demolition eventually came on March 8, International Women's Day. Erika had been due to speak at an event celebrating strong women that afternoon and to receive an award from the State Assembly that evening for being a strong woman citizen. Instead, she woke at 6am to find municipal guards surrounding her house and she hurried to remove her family's possessions before her home of more than twenty years was torn down.

Afterwards, when activists and residents were beginning to recover from the shock, the Mayor announced a press conference, where he would update the media on the plans for Vila Autódromo. Amid whispers of hope that the Popular Plan would be implemented fully, activists and residents headed to the location of his press conference, to speak to the media before joining the event to hear the municipal government's plans for the community. When they arrived however, they found the Mayor had changed the location and they would not be able to attend on time. They spoke to the press which was in attendance, then headed to the State

Assembly to celebrate Erika's award – an award given by members of the State legislature for her bravery in standing up to actions by the municipal government.

As details of the Mayor's plan trickled out in the days that followed, residents demanded a meeting to discuss the plans. The urban planners who had worked on the Popular Plan dismissed the Mayor's plan for its small number of tiny houses, with no real public space. Over the next few weeks, residents met with representative of the municipal government and secured some changes to the plan, including larger homes and more public spaces, with homes to be delivered before the start of the Games. In April, twenty families signed the first collectively negotiated favela rehousing agreement in Rio's history. Some former residents remained unhappy, such as Naiara, who had been told she could not return as she had begun negotiations with the government for compensation and was therefore deemed to want to leave the favela. This is despite the fact that her home was destroyed before she began negotiating and she had begun negotiating for compensation to help build a new home in Vila Autódromo.

Photograph removed for copyright purposes.

Image available at: https://www.gettyimages.co.uk/license/545318782

Figure 1.6: Vila Autódromo in the weeks before the Olympic Games. June 2016. Photo by Mario Tama.

After several months of building work and visits from journalists from every corner of the globe, the new homes were ready just days before the Opening Ceremony. Comparing Figure 1.4 to the previous photograph (Figure 1.3) shows the scale of the transformation. Residents inspected the buildings before accepting the keys,

aware that once they had accepted the keys they had no bargaining chip to force the municipal government to do more work. After inspecting his new home, Tobias, Erika's husband, told the assembled press pack wistfully that "it is not the dream, but it is a good home". City officials and public defenders negotiated over the contract for residents to sign, writing the contract out by hand before residents took turns to sign it and collect their keys. While Erika had told the press earlier that "the fight goes on" as many other favelas do not have their rights respected, other residents were more celebratory, with one raising her arms above her head and declaring "victory".

Notes on community

The word community appears frequently through this thesis and as such requires clarification given its contested nature in the social sciences. The first thing to state, clearly and unequivocally, is that this thesis does not attempt to theorise community. I am not, through the course of this work, making contributions to our understanding of what community is, how it behaves, or its utility for making sense of everyday life. Rather, I seek here to clarify some points about this notoriously fuzzy and contested term to clarify the meaning it holds within this thesis. At times, I draw on specific theories of community to explain resistance to evictions, particularly imagined communities (Anderson 1983) and communitas (Turner 1969; 1970; 1979) in chapter 5. When discussing these conceptual approaches to community I use the theoretical terms (imagined community and communitas), not the standalone word community.

The most common use of the term community throughout this thesis is as a synonym of favela. The Brazilian Portuguese word *comunidade* is used in this way, as an analogous term that lacks many of the loaded connotations and prejudices often associated with the term favela. There is some debate as to whether these two terms are identical, with some arguing favela is pejorative and preferring community as it holds less stigma, while others consider favela empowering and

argue community is used by the middle classes and elites to appear politically correct (see Fernandes 2011). Vila Autódromo is officially named Comunidade Vila Autódromo and many residents refer to the place as the community, not as the favela – although this is not the case for all residents and the terms are often used interchangeably. This is why I use the term frequently throughout this thesis, as it is the term used by those involved in my research.

So, what do residents mean when they say "community"? The simple answer is they are referring to the location in a way that includes the people who make their home there. This use of the term fits, in a sense, the classical tripartite definition summarised by Blackshaw (2010: 5) that community involves "locale, social network and a shared sense of belonging". These elements combine to form something greater, imbibed with warm, friendly connotations: as Bauman (2001: 1) puts it "whatever the word 'community' may mean, it is good to have a community".

While many have argued that this form of community has been forever lost (Bauman 2001; Blackshaw 2010), what I am arguing here is not that this form of community (necessarily) exists in Vila Autódromo, rather that this is the ideal to which residents refer when they use the term community. They are talking about a group of people who live in the same location, share close social networks and have a shared sense of belonging. That sense of belonging is evident in the way residents frequently refer to Vila Autódromo as "our community". This community is indelibly linked to the geographical land on which the favela sits. As Amanda explains, "more important than our homes is the social relations which exist here, the communal and social bonds, the history of generations. So, it is more important for us to remain on the land than in the homes". Community, for residents of Vila Autódromo, is not just the particular social relations which exist in the location, but it is also the location itself.

This thesis, however, does not seek to understand life in Vila Autódromo, rather it seeks to explore the resistance to eviction in that favela. This included a wider

group of people than the residents of the favela, drawing in activists and supporters from other areas of the city and across the globe. These individuals and groups, while many shared deep social relationships with residents, a shared sense of purpose in resisting eviction and a particular affinity for the place (as I discuss in chapter 5 with the similar term communitas), were not part of this community. While they were strongly linked to residents, they did not always link strongly to each other (not to say that they didn't get along, but that ties were merely weaker). These relations are perhaps best envisaged as a wheel, with residents as the hub and the various groups and individuals which supported residents as spokes.

Thesis structure

> Of course, in the process, there was suffering. They smashed up my face, demolished my home and called me crazy. But I knew the value of my land. I like living here and you cannot put a price tag on happiness. If I left this land, I would not find anywhere like it, because here I have my history, my roots. This is where I raised my daughter. This is where I have a story to tell (Penha Macena 2017).

This thesis will examine the resistance to eviction in the final year of this struggle. The following chapter discusses the theoretical context to which this thesis contributes. In the first instance, this sets out the vast body of evidence for the negative impact the Olympic Games has on host cities, using Jules' Boykoff's (2013) notion of celebration capitalism to frame this critique of the Games. These impacts include public debt, militarisation of the city, environmental damage, the cleansing of marginalised populations and of course, the focus of this thesis, forced evictions. Such impacts tend to impact more severely on marginalised populations, such as those living in Rio's informal communities, or favelas. The vast body of research on these communities will be explored to fully understand how these communities differ from the formal city and their historic position in Rio de Janeiro.

The Olympic Games and favelas, however, provide the context of the research; they are not the focus. This thesis is about contentious politics and the substantial literature on social movements is therefore discussed. This is with particular reference to important elements of the struggle in Vila Autódromo, such as new media and framing. Underpinning this struggle and at the heart of this thesis is a debate about the power to shape cities, and as such the complex notion of power is interrogated and clarified. I take a Foucauldian approach to power and discourse, with power and knowledge fundamentally intertwined and reinforcing each other. These issues of power, while often left somewhat undertheorized, are an essential part of research on social movements. What is missing, however, from this vast literature on contentious politics, is a robust engagement with space. Space has been used in relation to the symbolic value of protest locations, but this thesis argues for a more comprehensive approach to space and contentious politics. As we see from the literature on space and place, space is a malleable, changeable concept and a key argument of this work is that activists (re)constructed the space of Vila Autódromo as an act of contention. In doing so, residents were able to create a sense of the place built on what they wanted, as opposed to the municipal government's construction of the informal city. The differing constructions of place engendered differing narratives of favelas within a discursive contest over the place of favelas in the Olympic city. As such, understanding space and place, as well as the relationship between the two concepts, is fundamental for the argument put forward in this thesis.

Having set the scene theoretically, I move on to discuss the ethnographic approach taken in this research in chapter 3. Such an approach is common to understanding favelas and different societies, but much Olympic research ignores the particularities of host societies. The lengthy fieldwork was necessary to fully understand Rio in all its stupefying complexity and crucial in order to fully comprehend the contentious politics taking place. This fieldwork was deliberately open, with only a loose plan formed when I arrived in Rio, allowing me to follow leads based on what was happening in the city. Much of my online research in the leadup to fieldwork, for example, included a group called Ocupa Golfe, protesting

the environmental impacts associated with the construction of the Olympic golf course. The group were, broadly speaking, inactive during my fieldwork. Conversely, Vila Autódromo barely featured in my initial plan, but became central to the thesis as fieldwork progressed and residents continued resisting eviction.

A key objective of ethnography is to become part of the group or groups under study, as much as is possible, in order to gain a deep understanding of how these groups function. It is of paramount importance to acknowledge the role of the researcher in this process: as a non-Brazilian, for example, I was treated differently by different groups. As such, I provide a detailed discussion of the differing positions I took in relation to the groups involved in the research. This is of fundamental importance to the thesis: that I was welcomed in Vila Autódromo and RioOnWatch more than in other groups provides an important reason for these groups featuring more heavily in this thesis compared to others.

The discussion of my insights from fieldwork begins with a discussion of spatial theory and its application to favelas in chapter 4. Space is the physical world as we interact with it, full of conflicting and contested, socially constructed ideas and meanings which are constantly shifting. The nature of informal communities problematises Henri Lefebvre's (1991) well-known conceptual triad from *The Production of Space*. Lefebvre assigns the state an important role in defining urban space, based on the state's role in planning and building the city. In favelas, the state is absent from this role, with planning and building instead undertaken by residents, meaning the power of the state to define space is lessened. Residents of favelas, therefore, have greater influence in defining the space of their communities than those who live in the gated communities and condominiums of the formal city.

While the state's role in producing space is lessened, it is not irrelevant. The state still attempted to define Vila Autódromo as marginal, illegal and dangerous through a combination of public pronouncements and actions in the favela. In particular, this refers to the process of evictions: the debris from demolished homes was left

strewn across the community and some residents were not told in advance when their homes would be demolished. Conversely, residents sought to construct their favela as a welcoming, homely space, constantly emphasising the value of public space and celebrating their vision for the community, as laid out in the Popular Plan for Vila Autódromo (AMPVA 2016). The space of the community, constantly changing throughout my fieldwork, became a central point of contention in the resistance to evictions.

In this constantly shifting space, residents held celebratory events as part of a campaign known as 'Occupy Vila Autódromo', which I discuss in chapter 5. In large part, these events provided residents an opportunity to speak about their community on their own terms, to both explain and actively demonstrate why they value the favela. Normally, Vila Autódromo was only the focus of attention when homes were destroyed, but by attracting people (and at times, press) to the favela for community events, this campaign allowed residents to define their own community. I will argue that these liminal events were crucial in cementing a fixed notion of the place of Vila Autódromo in the minds of activists. By inverting the everyday space of the favela from a precarious, neglected area to a celebratory, communal location, residents and their supporters created a sense of the place of Vila Autódromo. This sense of place, bound up with the anti-structural potential of liminality, emphasised an idealised vision of what the favela could be. Place refers to space as it is remembered or described at a particular moment by a particular person, with socially constructed meanings more clearly defined and less easily shifting.

Importantly, this sense of place could then be spread across geographical scales to people who had never visited the favela; being physically present was not necessary to understand what the place was. This spreading of place occurred using social media, which I explore through two examples, a video campaign and live-tweeting. Through this, residents and their supporters were spreading the notion that Vila Autódromo, and implicitly favelas more generally, were good places to live, thus undermining the justification for removal. Many commentators, such as

Castells (2012) and Shirky (2008), have claimed social media is transforming social movements, lessening the influence of traditional media and placing it squarely in the hands of the people. I disagree, given that drawing attention to the cause remains problematic for movements. However, this case clearly shows the potential that social media has to capitalise on attention being given to a particular issue.

In chapter 6, I move on to discuss the reporting on the favela conducted by the traditional media, particularly the international media. This became a key element of the resistance to eviction, particularly once it became clear that legal action would not prevent removals. Residents sought to tell the world about their plight in the hope of influencing the municipal government to change their policy. I focus particularly here on the role of a favela-advocacy NGO, RioOnWatch, which worked with journalists to facilitate reporting on favela issues. Over years of working in Rio's informal communities, they had built up a network of community activists and leaders as well as international media contacts, playing the role of the middleman. This involved various different tasks including providing background information, contacts, quotes, photographs and arranging field visits, all aimed at what they called improving the coverage of favelas.

Improving, in RioOnWatch's terms, meant making journalistic coverage helpful to favela activists. They saw the Olympics as an opportunity to transform the discourse that surrounds favelas, arguing that the stigmatised representation of favelas leads to poorly designed and implemented policy solutions. This discourse intervention drew on the networks and reputation the NGO had built up with the international press, gaining privileged access to journalists as they researched their stories. RioOnWatch sought to show that favelas (more widely than just Vila Autódromo) were generally safe communities that made important cultural contributions to the life of the city. Vila Autódromo was a useful case for RioOnWatch, as I will show, where they were able to present their ideological arguments about favelas as fact, drawing on the sense of place developed in previous chapters. As such, the notion that favelas are not havens of crime and

poverty found its way into international media reporting around the Olympic Games.

The discussion of findings from fieldwork concludes in chapter 7 with a wider look at the contest over the place of favelas in the city. This sets up two understandings of the informal communities in Rio de Janeiro: one which emphasises community, safety and friendliness while the other emphasises danger, poverty and insecurity. Broadly speaking, I suggest that activists understand favelas as the former, while the municipal government understands them as the latter. While I recognise such a simplification is problematic, it serves to illustrate the contested discourse of favelas in pre-Olympic Rio de Janeiro. The construction of favelas as impurities to be removed provides the political justification for sweeping evictions. In response, activists offered an alternative understanding of favelas as vibrant, friendly communities with the problems of these areas caused by poor policies, from neglect to state violence. The Popular Plan for Vila Autódromo (AMPVA 2016) provides details of the community as residents envisage it, providing plans for integration with the city and further development.

Alongside promoting a different way of thinking about favelas, activists promoted the rights of those living in these communities which have historically been ignored. Through this section I explore how residents used the language of rights, specifically the right to housing, to resist evictions. Legally, Vila Autódromo residents had relatively strong rights to their land including a 99-year residential lease from the State of Rio de Janeiro, the owner of the land. Yet these protections were shown to be inadequate as residents' legal battles, supported by the State's public defender's office, failed and the municipal government proceeded with removals. In this, I explore debates around rights, sovereignty, and states of exception, all of which have become common to discussions of mega-events in recent years. I will argue a somewhat contrarian position that mega-events do not create a state of exception inherently, rather they have the potential to create the political conditions required for a state of exception. This nuanced difference will be drawn out through this chapter on human rights.

Chapter 8 concludes the thesis by drawing these arguments together and explicitly stating the contributions this thesis makes around space, place, power and discourse. I conclude by discussing whether the twenty families who remain in Vila Autódromo should claim victory given the hundreds of others who were removed. There are no clear answers on this. This is followed by an epilogue in which I discuss my reflections on the fieldwork and how my position shaped this research. This differs from the section on positionality in the methodological chapter in that I am discussing what the research is more than my position in the field; for this reason it is presented as an epilogue, somewhat outside the main corpus of this thesis.

In sum, this thesis sets out to explore the contestation about what favelas are in the Olympic city. It does so by examining the fight against eviction of the Vila Autódromo favela, located directly adjacent to the Olympic Park. I argue that this episode of contention is played out spatially, and that at present social movement theory does not fully engage with the spatial nature of activism, particularly when that activism is concerned with shaping our geography. Contention is inscribed on spaces and places: this thesis examines this in the context of one favela. In this case, global interest in the Olympic Games results in the place of Vila Autódromo being spread around the world through social and traditional media, including the political values inscribed on the place. This has important implications for the power of shaping cities, specifically the power to shape and (re)construct discourse about urban areas. The examination of this issue calls for engagement with the relationship between sovereign power and human rights. In the following chapter, I lay out the detail of the theoretical debates to which this thesis contributes.

Chapter 2: Theoretical Context

In early August 2016, three days of protest events were held at the Institute of Philosophy and Social Sciences (IFCS), part of the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro. These events, days before the Olympic spectacular got underway served to bring together opposition to the Olympics, with different groups hosting a wide variety of events covering a plethora of issues. Many of these were panel discussions on Olympic issues, from police violence to evictions, from environmental damage to the right to the city. Having attended the first two days, listening intently to the stories of those who lives had been disrupted by the Games, I arrived at the final day of this three-day festival of resistance looking forward to more of the same.

As I approach IFCS, I spot a few people photographing a small sculpture which commemorates one of the demolished buildings of Vila Autódromo. As I draw closer, I recognise an academic from the UK, Steve, who studies the Olympic Games. He'd emailed me and told me he was coming, but we hadn't managed to meet up yet. As I walk over, he spots me and smiles before introducing me to his friends, a Canadian academic and a Brazilian woman who is studying for a Masters degree. We chat for a little while, in English, about Rio de Janeiro. They are interested in the transformations in the city and well-informed about Rio, although at times it does become clear this knowledge has been gleaned from books not lived experience.

I head to the session in which my Steve is speaking (in English – his Portuguese barely stretches to a greeting, he jokes) instead of the event I'd planned to go to. We watch a documentary about Rio 2016 produced by a Norwegian academic who I'd met briefly a few weeks ago in Vila Autódromo. As well as Steve and his friends, a couple of Brazilian academics, one from Rio and another from elsewhere, take seats to watch the film. The documentary details some of the problems with Rio's Olympic project but, in my experience having spent nearly a year with anti-Olympic activists, it is fairly superficial in its critiques and lacks depth of knowledge. After

the film, we discuss the problems associated with the Olympics and how to fix them, in English. The debate is academic in nature, focussed on what the Olympics should become with some limited discussion on how the IOC could be forced to change.

This event, more academic than activist, is symbolic of the gap in knowledge I set out to address in this research. Later that day, I went to lunch with another group of (mostly Western) academics, before going for a drink with other (again, mostly Western) academics in the afternoon. This activist event, just a day before the Olympic opening ceremony, was crawling with researchers, all engaging with these activists for their research about the Olympic Games. Yet when discussion turned to how the IOC could be forced into change, there were few concrete ideas, let alone answers. A great many Olympic researchers do research with anti-Olympic activists in order to write about the problematic nature of sports mega-events, as I outline in the following section, yet hardly any of them write about anti-Olympic activism. This thesis does.

The greatest show on earth?

A great deal of research has been produced on the subject Olympic Games and sports-mega events. This work touches on numerous fields of knowledge including international relations (Manzenreiter 2010; Grix and Lee 2013), economics (Mathesen 2009; Zimbalist 2015), urban studies (Curi, Knijik and Mascarenhas 2011; Kennelly 2015), media studies (Billings 2008; Horne 2017), environmental science (Karamichas 2013; Boykoff and Mascarenhas 2016) as well as sport studies (Lenskyj 2000; 2002; 2008; Horne and Manzenreiter 2006; Sugden and Tomlinson 2012; Boykoff 2013) and investigative journalism (Simson and Jennings 1992; Jennings 1996). We, as academics, know a lot about the Olympic Games.

Jules Boykoff's (2013) concept of celebration capitalism provides a useful lens for understanding the contemporary Olympic Games, providing a window into the

myriad issues which motivate protest against the Games. This celebration capitalism involves six key elements: a state of exception, public-private partnerships, festive commercialisation, repressive securitisation, feel-good claims of sustainability and a crucial role for the mass media. While some aspects of celebration cannot be easily applied to Brazil, particularly because the concept presupposes a Western liberal democracy, it provides a useful frame for exploring the issues associated with hosting the Olympic Games.

Boykoff (2013) asserts that the Olympic Games create a state of exception, allowing host governments to radically transform cities with little democratic input. Boykoff's (2013) use of state of exception differs from that of political philosophers Agamben (2005) and Schmitt (1985 [1922]), who discuss the state of exception in relation to state sovereignty and the absolute power of the state. What Boykoff (2013) refers to here is not a state of exception in this sense, as the state does not arbitrarily suspend the normal rule of law per se, rather it changes and bends laws to expedite the Olympic process. This distinction is discussed in more detail in chapter 7. Nevertheless, Boykoff (2013) is certainly correct in observing that hosting the Olympic Games creates a unique political climate, where otherwise unthinkable measures can be approved. To differentiate from the state of exception, I call this unique political climate a state of exemption. Rule 50 of the Olympic Charter is a clear example of this, requiring host cities to pass legislation banning protest in all Olympic areas (thereby extending into much of the host city), often overruling constitutional rights to freedom of speech (Lenskyj 2000; 2004). Yet this is not an example of the state of exception, as it involves the normal process of law-making, not arbitrary declarations of sovereign power. This point is developed in greater detail in chapter 7.

The Olympic Games is typically delivered through a series of public-private partnerships, often lopsided deals where private companies profit while taxpayers pick up the bill (Lenskyj 2008; Shaw 2008). The state commits to fund all overspend, paying the majority of the costs for the extravaganza with little return on the investment (Kasimati 2003; Preuss 2004; Coates and Matheson 2006; Tien, Lo and

Lin 2011; Jakobsen et al. 2013; Mitchell and Stewart 2015; Zimbalist 2015), justified through problematic economic impact studies (Lee and Taylor 2005; Matheson 2009). In Rio, several Olympic construction contracts, notably for the golf course, involved the transfer of publicly owned land to private hands, with the land allegedly undervalued (Nogueira 2016). Investigations into fraudulent conduct in these deals are part of the wider, ongoing *Lava Jato* corruption investigation.

By festive commercialisation, Boykoff (2013) refers to the way the Olympics are used to sell cities through spectacular imagery. In the 21st Century, cities compete for global economic influence, with global cities such as New York and London key strategic sites within the global economy (Sassen 1991). The Olympics presents an opportunity to reimagine urban landscapes through "idealised visions and Disneyland geographies" (Guilianotti and Brownell 2012: 203) presented in the Olympic spectacle. In this imagineering of cities (see Rutheiser 1996), the iconic architecture of stadia is celebrated as a marker of the global city (Horne 2011). The vision of cities portrayed often bears little resemblance to reality, as the reconciliation between aboriginal and white Australia at the Sydney 2000 Olympics masked the continued marginalised of the aboriginal people (Lenskyj 2002).

Guarding the party has become an increasingly expensive operation, particularly since the September 11th attacks on New York and Washington in 2001. At the first summer Games after the attacks, the Greek government spent around one billion dollars on security systems, pressured by the US government (Samatas 2007). The inflated security budgets allow local security forces to acquire the latest security technologies and training (Sugden 2012; Boykoff 2013). These "long-term security legacies are not understood to be accidental, unintended, nor partial outcomes of today's events: they are explicit objectives" (Boyle and Haggerty 2009: 266). Questions of social control raised by activists are routinely marginalised (Rojek 2014), with political activists treated as a security threat on a par with terrorism (Monaghan and Walby 2011; van Luijk and Frisby 2012).

The International Olympic Committee (IOC) claims the Olympic Games are sustainable, with a major focus on legacy and environmentalism (Samuel and Stubbs 2013). The evidence points to the direct opposite conclusion. The reimagining of cities tends to obscure repression of marginalised populations (Lenskyj 2002; O'Bonsawin 2010), cleansing the homeless from urban centres (Lenskyj 2002; Broudehoux 2007; Kennelly and Watt 2011; Kennelly 2015). Evictions are commonplace (see COHRE 2007), while the scale of construction required ensure the Olympic Games cannot have a positive environmental impact (Shaw 2008). Indeed, all of Rio's promised environmental legacies had been abandoned before the Games even began (Konchinski 2016).

All of this, according to Boykoff (2013), is cheered on by a broadly uncritical mass media. Lenskyj (2004) demonstrates that media organisations often serve as supporters of the Olympic Games, overtly or covertly, making in-kind donations to the Games, such as free advertising or generous coverage. Boykoff (2014), writing about the London Games, shows that while there is a growing space for critical voices, they remain marginalised. Manzenreiter (2010), examining Western coverage of the Beijing Games, argues that negative coverage represents a refusal by the West to cede soft power to emerging nations, fitting a neo-colonialist discourse of the developing world as incapable of mega-projects like the Games. In this, host cities and nations across the developing world are generally presented as the problem, fitting existing stereotypes of developing nations as shambolic and incapable (Dimeo and Kay 2004), as opposed to the Olympic Games themselves being the problem.

This follows a recent trend to host mega-events like the Olympic Games and FIFA World Cup outside the Global North, with events including Beijing 2008, South Africa 2010, Sochi 2014, Brazil 2014, Rio 2016, Russia 2018 and Qatar 2022. In these events, the narrative is that of a rising global player taking its place on the global stage (Grix and Lee 2013; Cornelissen 2004). While these nations and cities differ greatly from each other socially, politically, culturally, economically, and historically, a common feature of many is a deeply unequal society. This deep

inequality means the negative impacts of mega-events are often more keenly felt, with various statistical measures, from numbers of evictions to deaths in construction, significantly higher in these cases (Cornelissen 2011).

While a great deal of this research has been conducted with activists opposing the Olympic Games, a surprisingly small amount of this work actually interrogates these activists as its ontological object. That is, many researchers speak to anti-Olympic activists in order to understand the negative impacts of hosting mega-events. Comparatively little research focuses on how activists organise against mega-events like the Olympic Games. This speaks to a wider ignorance of social movement studies within the study of sport (Wilson 2007). This thesis addresses this dearth of research, focussing on the mechanics of protest, taking the negative impact of hosting the Games as read.

While the majority of research on the Games does not focus on protest, there is a growing interest in the subject. Cottrell and Nelson (2010) attempted to provide a comprehensive overview of contention at the Games, analysing media reporting of protest at the Games. While this method holds several flaws, particularly given the documented biases in covering the Games (Lenskyj 2004; Boykoff 2013) and the focus on English language media, they found an increase in grassroots protest in recent years. Lenskyj (2000) has documented various cases of opposition to Olympic bids in potential host cities including Toronto and Berlin, noting the success early activism can have in stopping the Games. A common theme within press coverage of this activism against the Olympic Games is the framing of protestors as unpatriotic (Lenskyj 2002; Shaw 2008; Boykoff 2014; 2016), serving to limit potential mobilisation.

Boykoff's (2014) monograph on *Activism and the Olympics* provides one of the only major studies to focus comprehensively on protest against the mega-event. Taking a more in-depth approach than Cottrell and Nelson's (2010) relatively superficial media study, he discusses how activism at London 2012 was framed. He found that in 54% of reports, protest activity was reported using the principled grievance

frame and 47% using the disruption frame (as well as 9% for the criminality frame and 3% for the freak frame). The principled grievance frame portrays protest as a legitimate response to an unfair situation. However, on closer inspection, the majority of these principled grievance stories referred to union activism (the prospect of a tube strike during the London Games), whereas grassroots protest tended to be portrayed using the disruption frame, as an illegitimate and unnecessary disruption to ordinary people's lives.

Similar media analyses have been conducted around the Rio 2016 Games. CatComm (2016) focused on the representation of favelas in the international media during the lead up to the Games, noting a slight improvement, as they saw it, in these portrayals. Millington and Darnell (2014) looked more specifically at activist alternative media (although ignoring the vast array of Portuguese language alternative media), concluding that different discourses of development guided activists and Olympic organisers. The alternative media sources they examined argued that hosting the Games would not only fail to catapult Brazil's development forward, but actively harm development. Bailey et al. (2017) interviewed journalists who reported on the 2014 FIFA World Cup in Brazil, discussing the complexities they faced in reporting on two Brazils: one hosting the Games, the other mired in structural injustice.

Boykoff's (2014) research also moved beyond media studies, speaking to those involved in activism in London and Vancouver. He noted the diversity of groups involved in protest and the issues they organised around, arguing that anti-Olympic activism is a moment of movements, where diverse groups come together under a common issue which unites them. In this, environmentalists, housing activists, taxpayer's alliances and anti-capitalists were united in opposition to the mega-event. Rather than a clearly formed social movement, different movements come together with "relatively shallow, temporary cooperation" before returning to their specific issues (Boykoff 2014: 26). Within this, Boykoff (2014) highlights the importance of a diversity of tactics approach, whereby protesters refrain from criticising each other publicly. This allows for flexibility within the coalition, with

critics presenting a relatively united front against the mega-event despite their internal differences over issues and tactics.

In the case of the Rio 2016 Olympics these coalitions were formed, in large part, under an umbrella organisation called the Comitê Popular da Copa e Olimpíadas (Popular Committee for the World Cup and Olympics). Other Comitê's were also set up in other cities hosting World Cup matches (Dowbot & Szwako 2013; Amaral et al. 2014). Rio's Comitê Popular brought together a range of pre-existing movements, including international organisations such as Amnesty International, as well as local groups, including favela residents. Of particular note, the Comitês were heavily influenced by academic networks, involving many urban planners and social scientists. According to urban geographer and Rio de Janeiro Comitê member Chris Gaffney (2016: 342), the Comitê defined itself as a "space of articulation", providing a forum for movements to share plans as part of the event coalition. The weekly meetings of the Comitê, away from media coverage, provided an opportunity for different views to be discussed, making decisions based on consensus.

Social movements and contentious politics

This thesis discusses a campaign of resistance to evictions in the Vila Autódromo favela. I use the term resistance to refer to this episode of political contention as that is the word used by residents and activists, alongside the Portuguese term *luta*. *Luta* literally means "fight", but in this context is often translated as "struggle". Resistance, as the term implies, is primarily antagonistic: the objective is "to stop or alleviate threats to accustomed lifeways" (Flacks 2004: 149). However, while residents were primarily engaged in resistance to eviction, they were also, along with others across Rio de Janeiro, involved in mobilisations to promote housing rights, the right to the city and rights for favelas, all of which were threatened by the Olympic Games and other mega-events. In this sense, the resistance efforts in Vila Autódromo were clearly part of a wider Olympic moment of movements contesting the mega-event (Boykoff 2014).

“Contentious politics”, for Charles Tilly (2008: 5), “involves interactions in which actors make claims bearing on someone else’s interests, in which governments appear either as targets, initiators of claims, or third parties”. That is to say, contentious politics encompasses political action as it occurs outside of government. Here I am not concerned with the internal machinations of governing elites, but politics as it occurs in the streets and in everyday lives, in social movements. In particular, this thesis focuses on the politics of resistance. Put bluntly, resistance is the refusal to accept or comply, in this case to favela evictions. This resistance is a form of contentious politics, contesting the politics of mega-event led urban transformation.

This resistance can be thought of as a social movement. Della Porta and Diani (2005: 20) argue that a social movement involves conflictual relations between a dense informal network which shares a collective identity and clearly identified opponents. While several different groups came together to resist evictions in Vila Autódromo (Sánchez, Oliveira and Monteiro 2016) they identified under the broad label of supporters suggesting a collective identity accompanying the informal network. The opponents of this movement are clear, literally written on the walls of the favela: the state (specifically the municipal government, the judiciary and Eduardo Paes), real estate developers and the IOC. While political conflicts such as this are common throughout history, “mounting, coordinating, and sustaining them against powerful opponents is the unique contribution of the social movement” (Tarrow 2011: 6). Organisations such as the Vila Autódromo residents’ association, Comitê Popular and RioOnWatch were crucial in organising and sustaining the resistance to evictions over several years.

Scholars of contentious politics and social movements have paid a great deal of attention to the conditions from which movements emerge. Mega-events like the Olympic Games present what Tarrow (1996) calls a proximate political opportunity for social movements, a moment in which the political environment is such that actors engaged in social movement organising can be effective. LGBT rights activists

seized on Russia's hosting of the 2014 Winter Olympic Games in Sochi to air their grievances about homophobia in that country (Lenskyj 2014), while Tommy Smith and John Carlos drew attention to racism in the United States by raising their fists on the winner's podium in Mexico City (Boykoff 2016). These are examples of contentious politics at the Olympic Games, but this thesis examines something more: contentious politics about the Olympic Games.

In August 2016, an estimated 30,000 journalists descended on Rio to cover the sporting event, the crescendo of a steady stream of international journalists reporting on the city in the lead up to the Games. While many were focussed on the sport or simply followed tours arranged by Olympic organisers, many of these journalists sought to tell the story of the 'real' Rio, giving activists an opportunity to gain global attention for their cause by protesting in the Olympic city and linking their concerns to the Games. In Vila Autódromo, as this thesis explains, this was a major element of resisting eviction. There is a cruel irony to this opportunity however, as the opportunity to resist eviction comes because of the very thing that is causing evictions: the Olympic Games.

Of course, using press coverage of contentious politics can be helpful or harmful for social movements, depending on how the issue of contention is presented, or framed. The connotations of the statements "squatters are moved into newly built government homes" and "residents are evicted to small apartments far from local amenities" differ radically, despite describing the same phenomenon. These frames provide a "schemata for interpretation" (Goffman 1974), a way of understanding the world, allowing contentious politics to be either delegitimised or celebrated while news reports continue to appear truthful. These seemingly subtle differences in how information is presented shapes how audiences interpret information, as well as larger issues of framing around what issues are legitimate topics of discussion. Activists often frame their grievances carefully in order to engender sympathy to their claims and increase mobilisation (Snow et al 1986). Numerous authors have commented on Olympic athletes prefacing their critiques with "I'm not against the Olympics, but…" to avoid being framed as unpatriotic (Boykoff

2014; Shaw 2008; Lenskyj 2002). This betrays another important point: framing is not a one-sided affair, it is a contest in which social movements and their opponents contest meanings (Gamson 2004). By avoiding being framed as unpatriotic, activists are seeking to make their arguments more culturally congruent (see Entman 2003), more in tune with dominant political narratives, thereby gaining greater support. By speaking about favelas as a form of affordable housing, for example, RioOnWatch can hope to draw support from housing movements for its position.

Much has been written on the framing of contentious politics by analysing media coverage of episodes of contention (Benford and Snow 2000), including the work of Boykoff (2014) described above. As Snow et al (2014) note, however, much of this desk based research has not been complemented with deep engagement in the process of framing. Scholars have tended to examine frames as they appear in media reporting or activist materials, ignoring the discursive process by which frames are shaped both within movements and in interviews with journalists. Within this, the role of the media in disseminating frames is crucial, as journalists are able to frame activists' messages through mass communication. This is discussed in more detail in chapter 6.

The rise of new media technologies made easily accessible through the internet has been hailed as a revolutionary change to this power dynamic, massively democratising media and information (Shirky 2008; Castells 2012). These technologies allow activists to be the authors of media sources, bypassing the biases of traditional media as well as providing an interactive medium for two-way communication (Sullivan, Spicer and Böhm 2011). However, the new media sources created remain marginalised in the media landscape, still dominated by traditional media giants with large, established audiences (Chadwick and Dennis 2017). Increasingly however, there is a synergy between new and traditional media, with publicly available social media used as a source for traditional media reporting, an increasingly common form of information gathering (Myers and Hamilton 2014). This is discussed in more detail in chapters 5 and 6.

Social media is also used in various ways to organise protests and other activist events. These forms of communications have been invaluable for organising protests around the world in recent years, including for the wave of protests that coincided with the 2013 Confederations Cup in Brazil (Castells 2012; Gerbaudo 2012; Gutterres 2014), disseminating information for free at the click of a button. However, this does not necessarily mean that social media technologies somehow magically create protest: such online spaces remain contested sites of struggle (Khondker 2011; Gerbaudo 2012). Despite the utility of such technologies, the audience for radical politics often remains limited.

Social media technologies gained particular attention after major protests in 2011, most notably the Arab Spring, when activists in North African and Middle Eastern countries flooded to public squares to demonstrate against authoritarian leaders, and Occupy Wall Street, an anti-capitalist occupation in New York (see Castells 2012). These protests also stimulated an increased interest in space and place among social movement scholars, a facet of contentious politics that has long been underappreciated (Martin and Miller 2003). I will outline these related concepts later in this chapter. Such research discusses the way movements occupy highly visible parts of the city with specific symbolic values, such as Wall Street and Tahrir Square. At times of protest, this body of research argues, these spaces are transformed as a representational space (this term will be explained in the final section of this chapter), becoming a focal point for internal and external identification with the movement (Frenzel, Feigenbaum and McCurdy 2014).

Much of this existing research engages with space only superficially. Spatial theory, as I shall explain in the final section of this chapter and illustrate throughout this thesis, holds far greater potential in understanding how social movements construct and produce space to further their political cause. This goes beyond the momentary transformation of space for the protest event to a deeper, lasting reconstruction of space. That is not to say that no research engages with space in this way. When contention is explicitly about space, particularly public space,

scholars have paid attention to how movements actively produce and contest space and place (see Juris 2012; Kohn 2013; Risager 2017). However, this research tends to focus on the shifting dynamics of space during an episode of contention rather than the way space and place are transformed through contentious politics. This thesis seeks to add to this ongoing debate about the utility of spatial theory for understanding social movements, particularly by expanding this body of knowledge beyond contention over public space, focusing instead on a neighbourhood.

Appropriately enough, the issue of spatial contention has recent history in anti-Olympic protest, when a protest camp was set up in downtown Vancouver during the 2010 Winter Olympics in that city (Boykoff 2014). IOC rules obliged the municipal government to pass laws to ensure that only celebratory placards and banners were allowed in the city for the duration of the mega-event – flying in the face of freedom of expression. In response, a local university hosted an art installation of placards stating "no". The project "understood art as a public discourse at a time when public space was being dramatically altered and contested from different directions" (Boykoff 2014: 59). When social movements concern themselves with issues of space then the contestation of space becomes a key part of activism. This thesis examines a far more dramatic case than a few placards on a university campus: the literal tearing apart of a community, brick by brick.

Power and discourse

"Most social movement actors", Maeckelbergh (2009: 113) points out, "are not political theorists and do not employ perfectly coherent or consistent theories of power". Often, the same can be said for social movement theorists, with many key texts in the field not discussing power in enough detail to warrant an entry into the index (McAdam, Tarrow and Tilly 2001; Snow, Soule and Kriesi 2004; Della Porta and Diani 2005; Tarrow 2011; Goodwin and Jasper 2014). Perhaps this explains why in Chesters and Welsh's (2010) examination of key concepts in the field the complex issue of power warranted a mere two pages. This is perhaps surprising

given that Foucault (1980: 116) himself, undoubtedly one of the most influential theorists of power, found himself only able to analyse power "on the basis of daily struggles at the grass-roots level, among those whose fight was located in the fine meshes of the web of power". Here, unlike these scholars of movements, I will elaborate on the concept of power and how it is used in this thesis.

Power is broadly agreed to refer to the ability to change the actions of another free agent (Hindess 1996). Power is a fundamental "aspect of all relations among people" (Wolf 1999: 4), constantly exercised and struggled over. "Relations of power", Foucault (1979: 94) explains, "are not in a position of exteriority with respect to other types of relationships", rather they are an inherent part of all social relations. Even while accepting Foucault's assertions that power is not limited to the state and resistance to power is inevitable, we can say that all power relations are relations of domination (Lukes 2005).

While relations of domination may be inherent to all social relations they remain contingent and contested. Foucault (1977) himself argues that wherever there is power, there is also counter-power, or resistance. However, Foucault's genealogical investigations focus, as Lukes (2005) observes, on the ideal types of disciplinary apparatus, making his analysis of power fundamentally one-sided, with relatively little discussion of counter-power and resistance. While this leaves a sizeable gap in Foucault's theorising of power (ably filled by much the literature on social movements discussed above), it is also instructive of the challenges faced by resistance movements to overcome a system designed to thwart their counter-power.

In the final chapter of this thesis (chapter 7) I discuss sovereign power, a form of power usually associated with the state, generally understood to be absolute power over others. Foucault himself was highly critical of this formulation of power, arguing that "to pose the problem in terms of the state means to continue posing it in terms of sovereign and sovereignty" (1980: 122). While Foucault strongly critiqued this conceptualisation of power, I make use of the conceptualisation of

sovereign power as laid out by Agamben (1998; 2005). I do not see this as a contradiction. As Singer and Weir (2006) noted, Foucault's critique of sovereignty was focussed on its ubiquity in early modern political theories of power, specifically Hobbes' (2017 [1651]) conception of sovereignty as absolute power: a power invested in the sovereign by all people.

Foucault's insistence on analysing non-sovereign forms of power was a corrective to what he saw as a deficient field, arguing that "the state, for all the omnipotence of its apparatuses, is far from being able to occupy the whole field of actual power relations… the state can only operate on the basis of other, already existing power relations" (Foucault 1980: 122). As such, I view Foucault's rejection of sovereign power as the antithesis to the existing (at the time of Foucault's writing) thesis of power. In his own words, Foucault (1980: 122) didn't "want to say that the state isn't important; what [he wanted] to say is the relations of power, and hence the analysis that must be made of them, necessarily extend beyond the limits of the state". In my view, Agamben's (1998; 2005) work provides the synthesis for this dialectic, putting forward an understanding of sovereign power that acknowledges the relational nature of sovereign power with regard to citizens, particularly in the context of the state of exception. Indeed, Foucault (1979: 135) himself hints towards this understanding of sovereign power as limited and contextual.

A key contribution made by Foucault to the theorising of power is the term power-knowledge, where the most important character is the dash linking the two words. Power and knowledge are inextricably linked: "there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations" (Foucault 1977: 27). All knowledge is contingent on the power relations through which it is constructed, as Foucault's (1972) thorough deconstruction of the production of knowledge clearly shows: hence the preponderance of straight, white, middle class, Western men in the history of science. Knowledge produced through these power relations does not exist in the abstract, but is applied to the social world assuming

the authority of truth. As Hall (1997: 49) explains, “all knowledge, once applied in the real world, has real effects… to regulate the conduct of others”.

As such, power relations create and sustain a regime of truth by which society is organised: “each society has its regime of truth, its ‘general politics’ of truth: that is, the type of discourse it accepts and makes function as true” (Foucault 1980: 131). Discourse, in the Foucauldian sense, refers to “a group of statements which provide a language for talking about – a way of representing the knowledge about – a particular topic at a particular historical moment” (Hall 1992: 291). These discourses, the ways of talking about our world, are shaped by power relations so as to imperceptibly guide ideas. In essence, discourse can be considered as enforcing what Bachrach and Baratz (1962) refer to as nondecisions, serving to erect an invisible barrier to the proposing and discussing of certain policy solutions, thereby promoting those that are in the interests of the dominant party. This form of power is precisely what Hernan and Chomsky (2002 [1988]) critique in their classic text *Manufacturing Consent*; a tendency to keep radical political change off the table. Thus, if our discourse about favelas only enables us to think of these communities as havens of poverty and criminality, then our actions towards favelas will be bent on their destruction. If, however, our discourse allows us to think about favelas as safe, homely communities, our actions will be to nurture these communities. The contestation between these conceptualisations of favelas lies at the heart of this thesis.

These two understandings of favelas are narratives within a wider discursive field about favelas. Narratives are constructed stories about some aspect of life, picking and choosing which events to include and exclude, which connections to draw out and which to ignore (Toolan 2001). These two narratives, one from the government, another from social movements, appear throughout this thesis. It is important to note that this division into two narratives is a simplification – there are divisions within and among social movements on how to deal with issues of violence, for example. However, this simplification allows us to draw out clearly the discourse in which both these narratives sit, contesting what favelas are. This issue

is far larger than just the single favela of Vila Autódromo, yet as I will discuss in chapters 5 and 6, the community became an important symbol of this wider contest to define favelas.

In this sense, Bourdieu's approach to power and symbolic struggle is useful. Bourdieu (1984; 1989) approaches power through his concept of capital, with the economic, cultural, social and symbolic capitals available to individuals being fundamental to understanding power relations. While this may seem to contradict the assertion that power is relational, capital, in its original Marxist sense as well as in this Bourdieusian sense, is a form of social relations (Shaikh 1990). For Bourdieu (1989: 20), these capitals come to bear on symbolic struggles over "the categories of perception, the schemata of classification, that is, the words, the names which construct social reality" (Bourdieu 1989: 20). That is, drawing on imbalances of capital within social relations, individuals and groups are able to contest the discourses which shape their world, thereby exercising power.

Space and place

Space and place, despite their similarities, are not the same thing. As Low (2017: 12) notes, "there has been considerable semantic confusion within and across disciplines that has led to disagreements about the conceptual relationship of space and place". For some, they are utterly distinct concepts, while some argue they are overlap and for others still, they are synonymous. Beyond this, some scholars argue that place encompasses space, while others disagree, arguing that space encompasses place. The lack of agreement makes for a dizzying level of confusion. As such, the clarifications and definitions I offer here are by no means intended to include all possible interpretations of space and place; instead I seek to explain how I use these notoriously fuzzy concepts throughout this thesis.

First, let us draw the distinction between space and place, before we move on to the relationship between the two. "Space", as Henri Lefebvre (2009 [1979]: 186) plainly asserts, "is social". Doreen Massey (2005: 9) expands on this with three

general propositions on space: space is "the product of interrelations… the sphere in which distinct trajectories coexist… [that is] always under construction". In essence, space is the world as we experience it, the complex social world influenced by the complexities of power relations and social structures, with differing meanings for different individuals and groups. Space, contingent and contested, is therefore malleable and changeable through social relations fraught with power imbalances, both through physical changes to the environment and through social action in spaces.

Henri Lefebvre's (1991) magnus opus *The Production of Space* provides a triumvirate of concepts for analysing space, arming scholars with the tools to understand how space is socially produced and constructed:

> 1) *Spatial practice*, which embraces production and reproduction, and the particular locations and spatial sets characteristic of each social formation. Spatial practice ensures continuity and some degree of cohesion. In terms of social space, and of each member of a given society's relationship to that space, this cohesion implies a guaranteed level of *competence* and a specific level of *performance*.
> 2) *Representations of space*, which are tied to the relations of production and to the 'order' which those relations impose, and hence to knowledge, to signs, to codes, and to 'frontal' relations.
> 3) *Representational spaces*, embodying complex symbolisms, sometimes coded, sometimes not, linked to the clandestine or underground side of social life, as also to art (which may come eventually to be defined less as a code of space than as a code of representational spaces). (Lefebvre 1991: 33, emphasis in original)

Lefebvre (1991) also writes using a different set of terms for these three concepts, which I will use in this thesis as I find they provide more clarity. Spatial practice can be thought of as perceived space, referring to the way in which societies attach meaning to spaces through everyday life, bound up with all the complexities of

power relations in contemporary society (Martin and Miller 2003). Representations of space is also termed conceived space, referring to the official, intended meanings for space as ascribed by the architects and designers – those who conceive it. Finally, representational spaces can be thought of as lived space: space as we experience it. If perceived space is the way in which society attaches meaning to space and conceived space refers to how the state produces space, lived space focuses on which of these meanings are dominant, being simultaneously distinct from and encompassing perceived and conceived space (Soja 1996).

In contrast to the constantly changing and contested space, place is temporally fixed. As de Certeau (1984: 117) put it "in relation to [space], [place][4] is like the word when it is spoken, that is when it is caught in the ambiguity of an actualization". While space is constantly shifting based on social relations, place refers to space frozen in time, at a particular moment in which it is lived. As such, place refers to a specific set of fixed meanings attached to a particular location; a "felt sense of the quality of life at a particular place" (Pred 1983: 58). Within this, a plurality of places may exist in the same space; different affective attachments to place based on different people's embodied experience in space. As I will argue in chapter 5, space generates place, with the affective sense of place created through experience in space. Drawing on N. Scott Momaday, Basso (1996: 143 emphasis in original) argues that place "is a kind of imaginative experience… a way of *appropriating* portions of the earth", specifically, the appropriation of space at a given moment in time. A sense of place is thus created through the making of memories in space, freezing space in the imagination (Low 2017).

This sense of place, then, refers to an affective attachment to a particular geographical location. Importantly, this does not necessarily correspond to the physical environment in that people can have a sense of a place having never been to that place: people can hold specific ideas and connections to places to which they have never been. This applies to favelas; people around the world can hold a

[4] Following Gray (1999: 456) I have swapped the terms 'space' and 'place' in the quote from de Certeau, as he applied the terms space and place in the reverse of the general usage of the terms.

particular sense of favelas despite having never visited Brazil. Similarly, as spaces change over time, people's sense of those places does not (necessarily) change. Throughout fieldwork, I had a specific sense of the place of my office back in the UK, often missing the collegial working environment. When I returned from fieldwork, I discovered that the space had changed as colleagues had moved on, but my sense of place remained. This sense of place is often bound up with political meanings, most obviously in relation to nations as places with specific characteristics ascribed to them (see Agnew 1987). This can be seen in the two Brazils which Bailey et al (2017) identified in coverage of the 2014 World Cup: one is a place of hope and opportunity making its way on the global stage, the other a country stricken with structural injustices that present a bleak future.

Power in the space and place of favelas

Favela is a Portuguese word used to describe informal settlements in Brazilian cities, but similar communities exist around the world, particularly in Latin America and other parts of the Global South. I use the Portuguese term throughout this thesis as I find common translations to English such as slum or shanty-town to be extremely inaccurate based on my fieldwork, particularly with regard to Vila Autódromo. This favela is not a slum as it is fit for human habitation, nor is it a shanty-town as most homes are built with bricks and concrete. As noted in the introduction, I use the term community to refer to the geographical location (as a synonym for favela) and the group of residents which together are Vila Autódromo. Given their unusual nature, it is no surprise that a significant amount of research, particularly anthropological research, has focussed on life in favelas (Perlman 1976; 2010; Goldstein 2003; Robb Larkins 2015). While much of this work is incredibly high-quality, there is a relative dearth of research on life in the asphalt[5], as the formal city is known, indicative of anthropology's historical tendency to 'other' the very voices it seeks to amplify. Indeed, as Goulart and Calvet (2017) forcefully

[5] The *asfalto* (asphalt) is the opposite of the *morro* (hill), slang terms for the formal and informal city respectively

argue, academic studies of favelas risk reproducing and reinforcing the marginalization of favelas and favela residents.

As noted in the history of Brazil outlined in the previous chapter, the first favelas developed in the late 19th Century, built by migrants from rural Brazil to make up for the lack of housing. This self-built nature is the fundamental quality of a favela, that it is built by those who live there through a process Holston (1991) describes as autoconstruction. Favelas are therefore developed without the power of the state. As Maricato (1982) notes, this form of building often takes place through a communal process known as *mutirão*, a form of construction based in mutual cooperation in a direct contradiction with capitalist forms of production based on extracting profit. Favelas continued to form throughout the 20th Century as rural Brazilians migrated to the cities in search of work, occupying unused land in the urban periphery when housing was unavailable, often due to high costs (Perlman 2010). Given their informal and unplanned development, favelas can be very different from each other. In the built-up areas of Rio, such as downtown and the South Zone, this led to the traditional stereotype of favelas climbing up the steep hills in the city, as this was the only available space. In the North and West Zones however, which were less densely populated, favelas sprawled across unoccupied marshes and lowlands and, particularly in the West Zone region of Barra da Tijuca, the formal city developed around favelas.

Also evident from the history of Brazil is the precarious nature of favela housing and the propensity of the state towards evictions historically, with rights distributed unevenly across Brazilian society (Holston 2008). The infamous City of God favela, for example, was built by the military regime in the 1960's as a rehousing project: removing whole favelas and their residents from the highly visible central and South Zone favelas and relocating them to the periphery in the West (Dimitriadou et al. 2013). Waves of sweeping removals like this were common historically, but had not occurred since the fall of the military regime in the 1980's. This is in part due to the legal protections provided by the constitution of 1988, particularly certain laws passed by the Worker's Party government in the early 21st Century

(Holston 2008; Earle 2012), as will be discussed in chapter 7. Alongside this, with around 25% of Rio's population living in favelas, policies of favela removal are politically unfeasible (Perlman 2010), particularly given Brazil's compulsory voting legislation.

Over twenty thousand families were evicted in the run up to the Games (Comitê Popular 2015: 36). The Olympic Games brought a new wave of favela removals, unlike anything seen since redemocratisation (Magalhães 2013). The municipal government argued that the six hundred or so families evicted from Vila Autódromo were the only *favelados* evicted due to mega-events. Statistics compiled by the Comitê Popular (2015) dispute this, suggesting the figure increases to over four thousand families in over thirty favelas if evictions to clear land for legacy projects are included. While additional removals during the lead up to the Olympic Games and 2014 FIFA World Cup cannot be directly linked to mega-events, activists argued that many can be blamed on the climate of real estate speculation these events engendered. Faulhaber and Azevedo (2015) note that more favela residents were evicted during Eduardo Paes' term as Mayor than any other Mayor in Rio's history. Figure 2.1 shows the geography of these removals. Green dots represent favelas that experienced evictions, with the yellow homes representing the public housing complexes to which they were moved. The lines show that favela residents were, by and large, moved to the sparsely populated northwest of the municipality, away from the economic centre of the city. Vila Autódromo is not included in this map, as evictions had not begun there in earnest when Faulhaber and Azevedo (2015) conducted their research.

Map removed for copyright purposes.

Image available in Faulhaber and Azevedo (2015: 67)

Figure 2.1: Map of evictions from Faulhaber and Azevedo (2015: 67).

Essentially, municipal government policy attempted to destroy favelas while moving residents to government-built housing on cheaper, sparsely populated land to the west of the city. This is eerily reminiscent of the approach taken to favelas under military rule in the 1960's and 70's. The formal city had spread westwards in the latter part of the 20th Century and these Olympic evictions served to remove favelas like Vila Autódromo from the newly developed parts of the city. As Magalhães (2013) argues, the return of favela removals represents a legacy of the Games, with protections for residents eroded through the hosting of the event. These protections will be discussed in detail in chapter 7.

It would be remiss to discuss Rio's informal communities and not talk of the violence which characterises many favelas, made (in)famous internationally through films like *Cidade de Deus* and *Tropa de Elite*. My own experience of favelas in the field is similar to Perlman's (1976: 136): that these communities are "internally safe and relatively free from crime and interpersonal violence", perhaps influenced by my own whiteness. However, violence is a part of everyday life for many favela residents, a result of the dehumanising discourses surrounding poor, black Brazilians (Costa Vargas 2006) coupled with unequal distribution of rights in

Brazil (Goldstein 2003; Holston 2008). Perhaps the most important point to remember about favelas is that they are all different: some are remarkably safe, whereas others bear witness to stunning brutality at the hands of both drug trafficking gangs and the military police. The relative safety of these communities can change rapidly; at one point during my fieldwork a relative of one of Rio's biggest gang leaders was killed by police and many favelas became much more dangerous overnight as traffickers sought retribution.

While the favela removal policies pursued in the run-up to the Olympic Games physically removed residents to publicly built housing complexes, this was simply one side of a policy to incorporate favelas into the formal city, and by extension, the market. Favelas were also incorporated into the formal city through the controversial pacification programme, whereby specialist armed police were stationed in favelas. As Boykoff (2016: 225-226) points out, this policy was instituted to attract the Olympic Games to Rio, giving the appearance of safety and security to a notoriously violent city. While noble in its aims, pacification simply continued the "same old variety of oppressive state action in the favela" (Robb Larkins 2015: 139), providing little security for residents. The policy has been heavily criticised by human rights groups, blamed for over 2,500 people having been killed by police in the years leading up to the Olympic Games (Amnesty International 2016). In response, activist groups have developed smartphone apps to document and report police violence (Van Mastrigt and Reist 2016), but the pacification programme remains in place.

Throughout the history of the Olympic Games, the damaging impacts of the event have been felt most keenly by the marginalised populations of host cities (see Cornelissen 2011). Favelas, it seems, were inevitably going to be further marginalised by the hosting of mega-events in Rio de Janeiro and therefore likely to have a presence in the moment of movements around the 2016 Games. But this thesis is not about favelas per se. I did not set out for Brazil to study these communities; rather, this thesis sets out to examine contentious politics of the Rio 2016 Olympic Games. Given the history of mega-events harming marginalised

populations in host cities, it is no surprise that many of the contentious issues around the Games are related to favelas: specifically, about what these unique geographical locations are. This thesis examines these questions, interrogating the space and place of favelas and the power relations at play in defining the unique community of Vila Autódromo.

Conclusions

As we have seen, there is a great deal of existing research upon which this thesis builds, from a variety of different disciplinary backgrounds including sociology, anthropology, political science and geography. This thesis pulls these disparate theoretical fields together through the study of Vila Autódromo and the campaign of resistance to evictions. In particular, there are five areas of knowledge discussed in this chapter to which this thesis will contribute.

Firstly, this thesis will add to our knowledge of favelas and informal communities, particularly in chapters 4 and 5. While there have been several high-quality ethnographies focusing on favelas (Perlman 1976; 2010; Goldstein 2003; Robb Larkins 2015), the focus of this previous research has been on issues of poverty and violence. This research, not specifically focused on favelas, moves away from these somewhat fetishised issues to examine contentious politics. While the issue of state violence is ever-present, the focus of the research is in the campaign against this violence. This research was not initially intended to be about favelas, with various other individuals and groups providing the focus of this research alongside favela groups. However, the way in which activist groups, both from favelas and the formal city, were contesting the nature of favelas as neighbourhoods means the issues of space and place in favelas feature heavily in this thesis.

Secondly, and on a related point, this thesis will make a significant contribution to our understanding of the problems associated with hosting the Olympic Games, particularly in the Global South. This follows a recent trend to host mega-events outside traditional global leaders in the Global North, with a developing base of

knowledge to compare mega-events in developing and developed cities. The thesis also adds to the mounting evidence of human rights abuses associated with the Olympic Games, making timely contributions to public debates around mega-events and abuses of state power, particularly in chapter 7.

Thirdly, while we do, broadly speaking, know that mega-events like the Olympic Games are bad for host cities, there is very little research on what host populations actually do in response to this. This thesis provides the first (at least to my knowledge) ethnographic account of Olympic activism, adding depth to debates around protest and the Olympic Games. In academic terms, this bridges the (sub)fields of social movement studies and sport, which have rarely been discussed together. Given the growing awareness of the political significance of sport, be it through athlete-activists, the soft power of sport in international relations or fan movements, the sociology of sport needs to engage much more robustly with the existing knowledge on contentious politics. This thesis is another step along that road.

Fourthly, much of the recent surge of research on space and social movements fails to comprehensively integrate spatial theory with social movement theory. Many scholars have examined the symbolic spaces occupied by social movements, discussing the interaction between the meanings inscribed on space and the movement. This barely scratches the surface of the insights we can glean from bridging spatial theories with contentious politics, taking little consideration of the inherent malleability of space. Movements do not merely passively take on the meanings pre-inscribed on space, they actively (re)construct space to further their political claims. This thesis seeks to fully integrate these diverse theoretical approaches, this being the focus of chapters 4 and 5.

Finally, this thesis will contribute to the ongoing debate around the utility of social and traditional media for social movements, particularly in chapters 5 and 6. This debate has been sparked by the rise of social media and its utility in major movements including Occupy Wall Street and the Arab Spring. Much of this

research paints an overly optimistic picture of social media's potential to bring about radical social transformations, ignoring structural constraints many movements face in generating mass mobilisations. Much research on media and movements draws on the framing perspective, although as Snow et al (2014) note, there is a propensity for this work to be desk-based, focusing on what messages are being published in (traditional or social) media, rather than on how those messages are produced and negotiated. This thesis addresses this issue, examining how activists work closely with journalists to further their political cause based on ethnographic data from journalists field visits this process.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Having established the theoretical field(s) within which this research sits, in this chapter I outline the approach taken to researching activism at Rio 2016. I begin by laying out ethnographic theory before explaining how this was applied to the research questions discussed in the previous chapter over the course of the research project. The opening section considers what ethnography is, how ethnographers collect and analyse data, and how ethnographic knowledge is constructed and presented. This discussion is presented in generic terms, as these principles will be applied to the present research questions in the following sections.

These latter sections follow a chronological order as this doctoral research project can be divided fairly easily into three stages, each taking roughly one year of the three year project: planning, doing, and writing. In the planning section I discuss the practicalities of preparing fieldwork in Rio de Janeiro, including the creation of a fieldwork plan, gaining ethical approval and learning the Portuguese language. The section on doing fieldwork is split into two parts; the first outlining, in descriptive fashion, what I did over the course of a year in Brazil to address the research questions, while the second part discusses my position in the field and how I related to the various groups discussed in this thesis. The final section discusses the process of analysing and writing the thesis after I left the field, including grappling with ethical dilemmas, particularly in relation to anonymity and voice.

Ethnography

Ethnography, as Carter (2017) has pointed out, is a methodology, not a method. The notion of ethnographic methods, frequently referred to across a range of social sciences is a misnomer. Rather than a specific set of tools that can be utilised for researching the social world, ethnography is an all-encompassing approach to understanding the world around us. By embedding ourselves in the world under

study we can gain a close, empathetic understanding of people's lived experiences of social phenomena (Emerson, Fretz and Shaw 2011). An established methodological approach in anthropology, ethnography is increasingly used by sociologists, geographers and political scientists, among others. This crossing of disciplinary boundaries has helped create what Carter (2017) describes as the mutations of ethnography, changes in ideas about the fundamental nature of ethnography as it is deployed outside of anthropological debates. While some sociologists deploy what they call ethnographic methods, ethnography is better conceived of as an all-encompassing approach to research that cannot be split down into particularly methods or tools. As such, in this section I outline what this methodology entails.

Philosophically speaking, ethnography takes a constructivist approach to knowledge. There is no universal truth, but multiple different truths and voices competing for validity (Benton and Craib 2011). As such, the role of the ethnography is not to determine a universal truth about how humans live their lives and organise their societies, but to understand the ways in which social phenomena are experienced by different groups. This does not mean, however, that ethnography is merely a story. Ethnographic research must propose theories that help develop our understanding of the world (Hirsch and Gellner 2001). Through theory, we connect these stories, these lifeworld's, allowing us to draw broader conclusions about social life. As Habermas (1979) argues, if we retreat into our own subjectivities and shy away from proposing generalisable theories, we are merely telling stories, not doing science. As such, ethnography must always offer theoretical conclusions or models, not merely describing the world but abstracting it into theory. By doing so, our ethnographic knowledge becomes part of a wider social scientific discussion about social phenomena that can help advance our understanding of the world.

Take Geertz' (1963) *Peddlers and Princes*, for example, an examination of the pre-conditions for economic take-off in developing countries. His close examination of changing social structures in two Indonesian towns allows him to make several

propositions about economic development, such as “innovative economic leadership occurs in a fairly well defined and socially homogenous group” (Geertz 1963: 147). Such theoretical proposals remain contested, contingent and tentative; this is not intended as the end point in conversation about the social conditions of economic development, but it allows us to approach a deeper understanding of economic development through further research. Such propositions allow economists and anthropologists to move closer together, towards what Geertz (1963: 5) calls a “single framework of analysis”. Such theoretical conclusions then, albeit tentatively, should be advanced by ethnographers with an eye towards this unified framework, even as we may remain sceptical of that possibility.

Ethnographers traditionally use a range of social research methods in the course of their research, most frequently utilising some combination of observations and interviews, often complemented by other methods such as archival research or document analysis. But ethnography is not simply a mixing of methods, it is something more. In Emerson, Fretz and Shaw’s (2011: 3) words, ethnography is an “immersion in others’ worlds in order to grasp what they experience as meaningful and important”. Embedding ourselves in the social world of others allows us to become better acquainted with the texture of other life, as Borneman and Hammoudi (2009: 14) put it. Being there, being part of the world they are studying, can allow ethnographers to access a far greater depth of knowledge about that world. Ethnographic authority rests on having “been there” (Geertz 1988: 5), as well as the ethnographer’s ability to accurately interpret another culture (Clifford 1983). Reflexivity, which will be discussed shortly, is crucial to this.

In doing ethnography, the researcher is not simply chronicling events but is, in some form, living them alongside their participants. Ethnography is the methodological equivalent of understanding others by walking a mile in their shoes. While we cannot, for reasons I will discuss in the following sections, always walk in the shoes of those we wish to study given that we are different people with different experiences, we walk alongside them and experience their successes and failures, their struggles and victories, together. By experiencing the world together,

by being engaged and involved, ethnography is able to look behind the front-stage performances people project outwards and understand the deeper motivations for actions (Hirsch and Gellner 2001). That is not to say, however, that the ethnographer has access to everything, some aspects of life may always remain hidden and obscured from view.

Ethnography makes use of a range of methods – specific tools deployed to collect data – in order to achieve this goal of empathetic understanding. Most commonly, this involves some form of observations combined with some form of interviewing, often complemented by photography, collecting documents and archival research. For this ethnography, participant observation was the principal method of data collection, complemented by photography and document collection. These participant observations included conversations with activists, recorded in field notes, to delve for deeper meanings, as I will explain shortly. Methodologically speaking, observing is not as simple as it may seem. Observation encompasses the recording of sensory data – not only what we see, but what we smell, feel and hear (Pink 2009). Given the wealth of sensory data our bodies are capable of receiving, recording everything is impossible. Thus, the ethnographer plays an active role in selecting what sights, sounds, smells, tastes and feelings are worthy of entering field notes. Beyond this, the ethnographer chooses which places to go to, who to sit with, what level of participation they will have. Thus, what is recorded within field notes is heavily influenced by the individual ethnographer, making reflexivity on the part of the researcher fundamental to this method of research, something I will explain later in this chapter, as how I went about observing differs depending on changing contexts in the field.

I took photographs of scenes to help set the scene for readers, as well as to capture images more quickly than writing descriptions. While taking photographs, I was mindful to avoid taking photographs of people in order to ensure anonymity (as will be discussed later in this chapter), only including people in pictures when they were of groups or crowds, not individuals. In doing so, I was attempting to capture a broad picture of events through these photographs which could then complement

my written descriptions of the field. I also frequently photographed the graffiti which appears across the walls of the favela, serving as a record of what was written on the walls, as these walls and the inscriptions upon them were demolished throughout fieldwork. I collected documents at a range of events, as flyers and other writings were handed out frequently at protest events. I took a proactive approach to collecting documents, always picking up documents whenever I saw them being handed out. For the most part, these documents were free, although some of the larger ones, such as the Comitê Popular's dossier of human rights abuses (Comitê Popular 2015) or Vila Autódromo's Popular Plan (AMPVA 2016) required donations, which I freely gave.

In the style of Alice Goffman (2014), I did not ask formal interview style questions during this research. There are several reasons for this. While I had initially planned to conduct interviews, once I arrived in Rio de Janeiro two things became clear to me: activism was taking up a great deal of resident's their time and my limited fluency in Portuguese (in the early part of fieldwork) would mean much would be missed had I conducted interviews at this stage. I did have access to journalists' interviews of residents later in the fieldwork, as I was helping translate some of these interviews. I also had opportunities to hear residents explain their stories in their own words, when helping translate tours for USAmerican University students. After months of building relationships with activists and developing fluency in Portuguese to a point where interviews would be fruitful, I occupied a relatively unique position in relation to most activists. The vast majority of foreigners they encountered were journalists or parachuting researchers, arriving for a short period to hear their stories then leave. This included RioOnWatch volunteers, who stayed for slightly longer (usually around three months), but still left and moved on. I had established myself as a more permanent (although still temporary), trusted part of the social world[6]. Conducting interviews at this stage could have led to deeper understanding, particularly of people's underlying motivations for protesting. However, to sit down and do interviews, to mimic the journalists in the eyes of

[6] Examples of my gaining this insider status are discussed later in this chapter, in the positionality section

activists, would have changed activists' perceptions of me, making in-depth information beyond the façade presented to journalists harder to acquire. Instead, I found Goffman's (2014) approach of dropping questions into social interactions more productive, as this gleaned information outside the rehearsed answers activists gave to journalists, as well as preserving my status as a trusted insider. As Walford (2007) notes in his review of interview processes in ethnography, this tactic of dropping questions into everyday conversations is a common practice among many ethnographers. Such questions, along with their answers, were recorded in field notes, alongside observations of the context.

That said, conducting interviews would certainly have added greater depth to the research, particularly in bringing the people in the study to life, by giving more detail on their histories and motivations for resisting. In particular, this would benefit from being in residents and activists own words, instead of my paraphrasing of this. There was, however, no opportunity for me to do this without compromising my position in the field, as explained above. I was unable to conduct interviews at the very end of fieldwork as I had to leave Rio quickly after the Olympics Games before my visa expired.

Ethnographic data is recorded as field notes. In the process of writing down social life, the ethnographer transforms it "from a passing event, which exists only in its own moment of occurrence, into an account, which exists in its inscriptions and can be reconsulted" (Geertz 1973: 19). Field notes are constructed over several rewritings, and thus, Geertz (1973) concludes, they are fictions, not in that they are false, but in that they are interpretations made by the ethnographer. This construction, as Emerson, Fretz and Shaw (2011) suggest, is a multi-staged process. Field notes are written and rewritten over time moving from the immediacy and urgency of the field to the time and patience of the writing desk. Following Emerson, Fretz and Shaw (2011) in this project field notes began as jottings, notes taken in opportune moments in small notebooks or on a phone about what is being said or what is happening. What these opportune moments were depended on the situation: during group discussions, most commonly at meetings, I was able to sit

and write down key aspects of the discussion as it was happening, whereas for one to one conversations I memorised key elements of conversations and when the conversation came to its natural end, noted down as much as I could recall. What I noted down, the sort of questions I asked and the conversations I engaged in changed over the course of fieldwork as the project developed and will therefore be explained later in this chapter. These jotted notes in notebooks or my phone are mostly in English, but short quotes are frequently in Portuguese, particularly as my fluency improves over the course of fieldwork (as I will discuss shortly). From this, a field journal is written up on my laptop when I arrive home, usually later that day, expanding on these snatched notes, turning two or three words of prompts into paragraphs as the memories are fresh in my mind. These are written in English, including phrases in the original Portuguese in brackets as part of the text. Later, when writing these field notes into the thesis, they are edited again, emphasising points important to the theoretical argument while cutting out extraneous details.

Field notes were analysed using thematic analysis. This follows a process of reading the data and progressively drawing links between a range of issues or themes identified. Braun and Clarke (2006: 87) describe this as a six-stage process: (1) familiarizing yourself with your data, (2) generating initial codes, (3) searching for themes, (4) reviewing themes, (5) defining and naming themes and (6) producing the report. This presentation suggests the analysis is wholly separate from the collection of data, which is particularly problematic for longitudinal research methods such as ethnography. Instead, this process of analysis is woven throughout the data collection, as generating initial codes and searching for themes helps narrow initially open-ended research to specific questions based on the field (see Strauss and Corbin 1994; Tuckett 2005). In the following sections, I will explain how I analysed the data, applying Braun and Clarke's (2006) six stages of analysis to the specifics of what I did in practice, and when.

Given the influence I have on the process of data collection, it is necessary to interrogate my own position and biases in relation to the field. This allows the reader to account for these biases in the way this ethnography is constructed. I

discuss the practicalities of reflexivity in the following sections, but here I provide a theoretical overview of the concept. Reflexivity grew out of the crisis of representation, a moment in the 1970's when the social sciences were critiqued for the ways they represent others – Ann Oakley's (1974) affirmation that sociology is sexist and Asad's (1973) critique of Westerncentrism in anthropology being two important examples. In response, anthropologists (Clifford and Marcus 1986; Marcus and Fischer 1986) and later sociologists (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992) explored new ways of writing about and representing others, based on the recognition that research is subjective (Reed-Danahay 2001).

Central to this is reflexivity on the part of the researcher, a thorough and constant questioning of our own biases and the authority of our own analyses (Dean 2017). Through reflexive practices, researchers reflect on how their practice is influenced by their subjective values and experiences and actively work to minimise the impact of those, while also writing themselves into their research and accounting for those subjectivities to the reader. In doing so, as I have discussed in the introduction, we allow the reader to understand not only, in Becker's (1967) terms, whose side we are on, but why we have taken that position (see Gouldner 1973). This is not only a concern in the field, as reflexivity requires us to reflect on how we have shaped our analyses, as well as data collection (Frosh and Emerson 2005), something I have done in the explanations of analysis in this chapter. However, Snow (2002) argues that to consider this as a crisis is inappropriate: when translating experience to the written word something will always be lost. Instead, he argues, we should be seeking to secure a close approximation of experience, not exact accuracy. The ability to represent others therefore also rests on close ethnographic engagement with the field, coupled with these reflexive practices, as Borneman and Hammoudi (2009: 14) argue:

> It is certainly true that an encounter and an exchange, verbal and nonverbal – Being there, in short – guarantees nothing [for a researcher's ability to represent others]… It is also true, however, that the more one shares time and speaks with other people, the better acquainted one becomes with the

> texture of other life, making it more probable there will be a closer fit between the order of words and the order of things.

As noted in the introduction to this thesis, the thesis is written as an ethnography. Ethnography is a methodological approach to understanding the social world, but it is also a way of writing about the social world, a literary form. These are two distinct definitions of the word: not all ethnographic research is written as ethnography, in the ethnographic style. Ethnography as a form of writing does not simply tell the reader about the social world that has been studied, it invites them in. It is, in Van Manaan's (1998: 1) terms, a "written representation of culture". Ethnographic writing should give the reader a sense of being there, they should be able to see the world through their minds eye. As Geertz (1988) notes, this is a task we can only ever fail at, as bringing the full complexity of the social world onto the page is impossible – things will always be missed out, peripheral details cut to make the work more readable. Again, Snow's (2002) approach of aiming not at exact accuracy but at close approximations of experience makes this goal more realistic.

Such an effect is achieved through the use of thick descriptions (see Geertz 1973). These descriptions build a detailed picture of events for the reader, including not only what is seen and heard but the smells and feel of events. Thick descriptions include not only crucial details for understanding the theoretical points the ethnographer makes, but give details that help the reader reproduce the world in their imagination. Some, such as Kuper (1994: 117) have argued that such descriptions should be presented in such detail that the data could be worked over by another analyst to draw different conclusions, placed on "the ethnographic record" as part of "the central shared heritage of anthropology". This openness to other interpretations requires an ambiguity in the argument that does not sit well with producing a doctoral thesis, whereby the making and evidencing of an original contribution to theoretical knowledge is paramount. Indeed, to fully describe the social world would take so long as to leave no space for analysis and events discussed will always be selected to support the theoretical conclusions drawn. It therefore remains a balancing act in the writing of ethnography to present the

world in sufficient detail while simultaneously providing a rigorous theoretical argument. In doing so, I follow ethnographers such as Erika Robb Larkins (2015) and Julie Billaud (2015) in using thick descriptions as starting points for delving into theoretical understandings of the world.

Ethnography then, allows the researcher to gain a close, empathetic understanding of the lifeworlds of others. The field for this project, the aspect of social life on which this work focuses, is those resisting eviction in Vila Autódromo, including both residents and their networks of support. This is crucial in understanding protest at Rio 2016 for several reasons. As many recent ethnographic works on social movements have pointed out (see Mathers and Novelli 2007; Maeckelbergh 2009; Lichterman 2013), social movements produce different ways of knowing the world and imagining futures. Ethnographic research allows me to understand how activists understand the Olympic Games and favela evictions and the different possibilities for the future which they lay out. Conducting interviews or discourse analysis of media reporting would leave many questions unanswered about the lived experiences of activists and how they actively construct their world. Such approaches would allow me to understand the front-stage of activism but would leave much of the back-stage planning and motivations obscured. Ethnography, then, gives me a fuller picture of anti-Olympic activism in Rio de Janeiro.

Similarly, many researchers write about the Olympic Games, following the event around the world and understanding these manifestations in different local contexts (see for example Horne and Whannel 2016). These researchers tend to be constrained by teaching and other commitments, making long-term ethnographic fieldwork challenging. This leaves them resorting to other methodological approaches to research, leaving a significant gap in our knowledge about the lived experience of activism against the Olympic Games, a gap this thesis helps to fill. Ethnographic knowledge about how activists socially construct the Olympic Games and the associated transformation of urban space is sorely missing from current debates about the impact of hosting sport mega-events.

Planning and Preparing

Ethnography starts well before arriving in the field. The process of planning and arranging fieldwork was long and torturous. Alongside academic preparations of reading on social movement theory and ethnography, there were practical concerns to be arranged, such as gaining ethical approval and arranging a visa, which I will discuss shortly. Central to the ethnographic project, however, I needed to learn to speak Portuguese. When I was accepted into doctoral study, I started learning with audio recordings and once my studies began I took weekly lessons at a language school in London for the first year of my PhD. I complemented this with a smartphone app which I used with increasing frequency as the fieldwork period approached, spending around half an hour every day on the app in the weeks before departing. This gave me a solid grounding in the Portuguese language, although as we will see shortly, I was not fully prepared for understanding Carioca accents and slang terms.

For both the visa and ethical approval, I needed to develop a plan for the fieldwork period. The plan I created was deliberately open, allowing me to respond to the field and events on the ground as it became clearer to me what was happening in the city. Through searching online, I identified five social movement organisations active in Rio de Janeiro whose area of interest intersected in some way with the Olympic Games: RioOnWatch, the Comitê Popular, Ocupa Golfe, the MTST (Homeless Worker's Movement), and Mídia Ninja. RioOnWatch was the project of the NGO Catalytic Communities and published favela perspectives on development in the Olympic city in both English and Portuguese. The Comitê Popular was a self-styled "space of articulation" (Gaffney 2016: 342) for anti-mega-event activism in Rio, drawing together various movements to contest the impacts of the World Cup and Olympics. Ocupa Golfe (Occupy Golf) were a group of environmental activists who had made international headlines in late 2014 when they occupied the golf course construction site to protest against environmental damage. The MTST is the urban branch of the world-famous MST (Landless Worker's Movement; see Gohn 2009) and their focus on housing aligned with concerns held by anti-Olympic

activists around the world. Finally, Mídia Ninja (NINJA as an acronym for Independent Journalism and Action Narratives) were instrumental in publicising popular narratives of protest during the wave of activism that swept Brazil in 2013. In my plan, I would spend approximately two months with each group, with breaks in fieldwork taken in Curitiba, a city in Southern Brazil where I would be a visiting researcher at the Federal University of Paraná (UFPR), who sponsored my visa application.

Alongside this, I submitted ethical approval paperwork to the university ethics board. As the full picture of the research was unclear and could potentially include groups and individuals undertaking illegal actions, under suspicion and surveillance by Brazil's brutal military police, I committed to ensuring anonymity for participants through the use of pseudonyms. Simultaneously, I applied to the Brazilian embassy for a year-long academic research visa, supported by UFPR. Once the visa was approved, I booked flights from London to Curitiba (via São Paulo) where I would spend a month at UFPR before heading to Rio. I began contacting the various organisations that appeared in my plan to try to arrange the fieldwork in advance. I got very little response, with only RioOnWatch responding and even with them my access wasn't confirmed until I was able to speak with them via Skype while in Curitiba.

In the field

Upon arriving in Curitiba, I began taking field notes of my experiences, mostly focussed on cultural differences between the UK and Brazil; everything from the different food I was eating to the way greetings always involved some form of touch as well as verbal greeting – kisses on the cheek when greeting women (usually just 1 in Curitiba, but 2 in Rio) and a pat on the shoulder when greeting men, or sometimes a hug between established friends. While it is a gross oversimplification, there is some truth to the commonly held notion that Curitiba is a fairly European city, by Brazilian standards. As Sarah, who lived in Rio, was raised

in the USA and had previously lived in Curitiba put it: “it’s Brazil, but stuff works”. In this, it was a useful halfway house for me, between a setting I knew and one that was alien to me, that I sought to understand. In this period my Portuguese skills developed with immersion in the setting – I was able to converse, albeit somewhat awkwardly, in Portuguese, yet participating in complex conversations or group discussions remained beyond me. In light of this, I booked private lessons at a language school in Rio, supported by a small Santander Universities grant to assist with fieldwork.

On arriving in Rio, I began making field notes beyond everyday interactions and cultural differences. I started attending RioOnWatch’s weekly meetings and recording them (as well as the post-meeting bar chats) in my field diary (see chapter 6). These meetings involved each volunteer giving an update, ostensibly to the staff, of what they were doing, which I would note down alongside more general discussions of issues in Rio. I made a point of noting down things about how the organisation worked, when members of staff were giving instructions to volunteers, for example. Along with a RioOnWatch intern, I attended a Comitê Popular debate on militarisation, and began attending their weekly meetings in downtown union offices, making notes on these events. These meetings were, by contrast, more open discussion of events and plans for activism, chaired by one person but based on consensus building. I made notes about what was said, but also who spoke and how the meeting was organised and chaired to be a relatively open space of discussion. At these two types of meetings, I tended to sit quietly, listening and taking notes, only contributing when asked to (although I became more involved at RioOnWatch meetings later in fieldwork), again following Goffman’s (2014) approach of trying to be a fly on the wall.

Following suggestions from RioOnWatch staff and volunteers and members of the Comitê Popular, as well as journalists and other researchers I met in the city, I began attending events in Vila Autódromo, a favela where residents were still resisting eviction (most of the other evictions caused by mega-events were already complete). During the initial two-month period in Rio I visited Vila Autódromo five

times for a range of events: a work party to renovate the children's play area (see introduction), a cultural festival, a protest over road access, a football tournament (see chapter 4) and to help translate for a group of US university students on a visit organised by RioOnWatch. While not all these events are described in the thesis, they are crucial to informing the wider analysis, as well as establishing my presence in the field. At these events, I participated in various ways, generally under the auspices of a RioOnWatch volunteer as I developed relationships with residents and explained my research when opportunities presented themselves to do so. For most of the Occupy Vila Autódromo events, I observed speeches and performances as part of the crowd, making notes as I did so. I also had short conversations with people, asking residents about how and why the event was organised while asking visitors about why they had come to the event. When in the favela to help with translation, I acted as a go-between for residents, translating their speeches and questions, memorising key points to jot down in my notes when nobody was speaking, or somebody else was translating. Such opportunities tended to present themselves every few minutes or so.

Throughout this period, I grappled with learning Portuguese. On multiple occasions, I missed important bits of conversation and my strategy of listening quietly in meetings was enforced through my inability to play an active role (except at RioOnWatch, where most meetings were conducted in English). Over the course of these two months, I took regular Portuguese classes at a local language school. These private lessons functioned as conversations, allowing me to practice speaking and particularly listening, the aspect of Portuguese I was struggling most with. Being private lessons, these classes often took the form of a one to one conversation, usually about my research and what I was discovering about the city, thereby inadvertently becoming a useful space for reflecting on the research. My fluency improved greatly over this two-month period as I grew used to the Carioca accent and slang, such that I was able to understand the vast majority of what residents were saying to me when I left for Curitiba. Indeed, towards the end of this period I was successfully translating resident's speeches for non-Portuguese

speakers and some Carioca's commented on how much my Portuguese had improved.

As a result of my struggle to grasp Portuguese in this period, the vast majority of my notes were taken in English in this early period of fieldwork. This includes the details of most conversations in Portuguese: I would sum up what I had been told in a couple of lines in English jotted in my notepad. As a result of not getting down the exact words in Portuguese, much of what was said to me in this period appears in my typed up field diary as paraphrased speech, as a result of not wanting to misquote residents. This paraphrasing of speech has filtered through to the finished product and many of the conversations I had with residents, particularly from this early period of fieldwork, are therefore presented not as quotations, but as paraphrased speech. The implications of this paraphrasing of speech are discussed in the epilogue as part of a broader discussion of the role of a gringo researcher. The frequency with which I was able to record quotes in Portuguese improved over time as my fluency, as well as my notetaking skills, developed with practice.

I returned to Curitiba in January to analyse what I found in an attempt to refine my research from the deliberately broad subject of anti-Olympic activism to something more specific and focussed. Over this period, I stopped making notes on everyday interactions and cultural differences which had become familiar to me, only writing about things relevant to the emerging focus of my study, of which there were very few in Curitiba. Over the course of the month I looked back on the field notes I had created and started to draw links between them. I read through my field notes and made notes of interesting points, familiarizing myself with the data and generating initial codes, in Braun and Clarke's (2006) words. This generated new questions for further exploration. In particular, I was interested in how the story of one small favela was making headlines in major international media outlets. As one of RioOnWatch's editors had explained in a meeting, Vila Autódromo's resistance had initially been focussed on legal battles in the courts, but as these avenues for redress had been exhausted, residents were turning to media coverage to exert pressure for change. In particular, I was interested in the role Occupy Vila

Autódromo events were playing in this media coverage, with one activist telling a journalist at the Cultural Festival in November that the events were designed to show the favela in a more positive light. The ways in which this was done became my initial codes, looking at welcoming behaviours, scene-setting and celebrations.

It was widely expected – by residents, the Comitê Popular and RioOnWatch – that the municipal government would not want to leave the favela in its present condition during the Games and any resolution to the dispute must come in time for the likely required construction work to be completed. Thus, as one RioOnWatch editor described it in a planning meeting, the early months of 2016 would be the "final lap of a long struggle". She spoke of the need to keep the focus of reporting on the community during this period as it would help make resident's goal of permanence more likely. I resolved to focus on this issue when I returned to Rio, particularly on the international dimension – something I was drawn to, at least in part, due to my status as an outsider to Brazilian society (I will discuss this in more detail shortly). I was particularly interested in the way activists were choosing to portray the favela to journalists, inspired by a comment made by a member of the Comitê Popular to a journalist at the cultural festival, explaining that the event is intended to show the vibrant community which the municipal government denies. Other groups that had been part of my initial plans had little place in this evolving picture; Ocupa Golfe was not active during this period, while the MTST and Mídia Ninja directed much of their energies toward national politics, protesting against the impeachment of Dilma Rousseff and thereby were outside my field of study.

When I returned to Rio in February for a second two-month period of fieldwork, I followed developments in Vila Autódromo closely while continuing my Portuguese lessons. Given my emerging interest in in how media organisations were reporting on the favela I took the opportunity to shadow a visit to the favela organised by RioOnWatch for a North American television crew in early February, as well as volunteering to escort a team of European journalists on a visit to the favela at the end of March. Alongside this, I continued to reach out to journalists reporting on

Rio's Olympic preparations, including giving an interview to a Canadian newspaper journalist and asking him questions about his experience of reporting on the city. In late February, the struggle over evictions in Vila Autódromo reached fever pitch as the municipal government received legal clearance to demolish the residents' association and key activist Erika's home. In the week or so that followed, activists occupied the favela to protest demolitions, many (including myself) sleeping in Erika's home so they would be in situ for early morning demolitions (see chapter 5).

Over the course of this short period at the end of February and start of March, I spent a large amount of time either in the favela, or writing up notes on what had happened in the favela. As a result of demands on my time, I stopped attending Comitê Popular meetings and Portuguese classes. I prioritised being present in Vila Autódromo over these activities as this seemed like it could be the end of the struggle, possibly even the end of the favela and as such would be a crucial element of my field notes. Portuguese classes and Comite meetings would continue beyond this month so if necessary, I would be able to pick them up again later. Alongside this, as I discuss in more detail shortly, the Comitê meetings were not helping me address the questions that were emerging in my research. In part this was because the Comitê had set up a new organisation, under the banner "Jogos da Exclusão" (Exclusion Games) to co-ordinate protest at the Olympic Games. By attending the monthly meetings of this new grouping, which was external to the Comitê in an attempt to draw in more groups, I was able to see how Vila Autódromo was incorporated into the wider critique of the Games. The Portuguese classes were similarly missed due to a lack of time, but after missing several lessons, I realised that I was able to understand the vast majority of what I was hearing without the lessons – conversations had become easier and the frequency with which I wrote in my notes that I didn't understand what had been said had reduced drastically. I therefore decided such lessons were no longer necessary and I relied on informal discussions with bilingual friends, particularly my (Carioca) girlfriend, when I encountered vocabulary I was unfamiliar with.

Returning to Curitiba in April as planned, I looked back over my field notes and began to see, for the first time, what this thesis might look like through reading over my notes and reflecting on my experiences – or, in Braun and Clarke's (2006: 87) terms, "searching for themes". There had been a range of groups working at different geographical scales to support the fight to remain in different ways that served to build on each other's work effectively despite relatively limited active co-ordination of efforts. Residents worked at the hyper-local level of the favela, publicising their story to those who visited to listen, as well as speaking at events across the city, usually facilitated by the Comitê Popular, as I had observed at events like the launch of the Comitê's dossier of human rights abuses. The Comitê Popular worked to build consciousness and awareness, primarily in Rio but also across Brazil, building on activist's networks developed to contest the World Cup (Amaral et al. 2014), giving the struggle in Vila Autódromo a prominent position in this. RioOnWatch, while also raising consciousness across the city, primarily served to publicise Vila Autódromo to a foreign, English-speaking audience, through writing about the favela as I had both done myself and observed others doing. Most journalists, particularly international journalists, due to the relative ignorance of favelas in mainstream Brazilian news (Rosas-Moreno and Straubhaar 2015), had a reach far greater than any of the groups. Indeed, international journalists were specifically thanks by a range of banners hung at events in the favela. These journalists were however influenced by actions these previous groups were engaging in, particularly by RioOnWatch in the way they discussed the favela and showed journalists around as I had both observed and performed (see chapter 6). This basic idea of how these different groups interacted and the roles they played can still be seen, albeit significantly more developed, as the backbone of this thesis.

Back in Rio from May to the end of fieldwork in September, I followed up aspects of this where I still had outstanding questions, particularly around journalists' role, assisting more journalists in reporting on Vila Autódromo, including two North American print journalists and one North American TV crew. I also followed the development of the Museum of Removals, a project serving to valourise the memory of the favela and their struggle that served, in some regards, as a

continuation of the Occupy events. As the Mayor had announced and agreed an upgrading plan for the favela, there was (relatively speaking) little active campaigning going on around Vila Autódromo. The work I was doing at these events served the role of reviewing themes (see Braun and Clarke 2006), but instead of checking my themes against the dataset, I was able to check them with participants through conversations about the resistance. Alongside this, I focussed my attention on the upcoming Jogos da Exclusão events. I had two objectives in mind for this case. Firstly, I was interested in the degree to which Vila Autódromo was part of this wider picture of anti-Olympic activism, with several residents attending events and some speaking on panels. Secondly, this event served as a basis for comparison, helping draw the unique elements of the struggle in Vila Autódromo, particularly the spatial nature of resistance, into sharper relief. As such, while not explicitly discussed in this thesis, my experiences and observations at these events helped inform the analysis of Vila Autódromo's struggle.

By this stage of fieldwork, I had become fluent in Portuguese. I had swapped my formal Portuguese classes for weekly Sunday lunches with my girlfriend's parents, a great opportunity to continue improving my language skills as well as gaining a broader understanding of the context. In particular, being immersed in left-wing activist groups meant I had a relatively poor appreciation of racist and sexist nature of Brazilian society, something that was greatly expanded through talking through broader political issues such as the impeachment of President Rousseff[7]. I was frequently engaging in conversations in the local language and often felt confident doing so, frequently gaining compliments on my language skills. As a result, I was able to record significant chunks of data in Portuguese, making jottings in Portuguese which would go on to become quotes. This was usually one or two words jotted in my notebook, then expanded on from memory when typing notes up later that day. Description was almost exclusively in English, but in this late period of fieldwork, I was frequently recording quotes in Portuguese. That is not to

[7] For clarity, this appreciation was gained through my girlfriend and her family explaining these issues to me – I am categorically not saying they represent the racist and sexist elements of Brazilian society.

say I picked up everything, there were still words I missed or didn't understand, moments when people spoke over each other in which I lost track of the conversation, and certain people whose accents I struggled to understand (although this would likely have been the case even conducting research in my mother tongue). Such issues, however, had become unusual, a direct inversion of my first months where struggling to understand what was being said was the norm.

Positionality

A range of things affected the way the project developed during fieldwork in the way described above. Throughout the research process, I had to make choices about how to proceed with the project. While this is not confined to the fieldwork period, the organic nature of ethnographic fieldwork means that everyday decisions and choices– who to sit with, which events to attend – affect the direction of the research. It is therefore not possible to account for each of these decisions individually and instead I will here discuss my position in the field in general terms, seeking to elucidate how I related to others and how that informed the choices I made.

As intimated above, being British played a significant role in my relation to the field. This manifested itself in the struggles with Portuguese I experienced in the early part of fieldwork and developing the focus of my research into how Vila Autódromo came to be portrayed to those outside Brazil. I was certainly treated differently by locals as a result of being gringo, a term used for foreigners (see the epilogue for a fuller discussion of what this term means). Rio, particularly prior to the Olympics, is a city with a significant gringo population who occupy a unique social position. They are, by and large, treated as guests: well received and treated exceptionally well, with locals going out of their way to ensure they feel welcome. This treatment, however, serves to reinforce their status as outsiders, something I experienced in doing this research, as I will explain in more detail shortly. I provide a more comprehensive discussion of being gringo in Brazil in the epilogue to this thesis.

In early February my growing confidence in the city was shaken when I was mugged while walking downtown. While this didn't have a major impact on the research project, aside from the loss of numerous photos stored on my phone, it did serve to close off other avenues of inquiry that might otherwise have been taken. While I had been prepared for such an event during fieldwork, carrying relatively little cash and a cheap mobile phone, I was shocked by the violence of the mugging, leading to major anxiety when alone on the streets. I avoided going anywhere alone if possible, particularly to parts of the city I didn't know. While I was perfectly comfortable going to events in Vila Autódromo, for example, I avoided going to protests in the north zone favela of Complexo do Alemão and Praça Mauá downtown. These general issues with fieldwork are discussed more fully in the epilogue to the thesis, but I mention them here as they influenced my decisions to focus on Vila Autódromo in the way that I did. In the following paragraphs I expound my position in relation to the range of groups discussed in this thesis.

I begin with RioOnWatch, the group with whom I felt most 'at home' with during fieldwork. Part of this is linked to being gringo, which as I discuss above and in the epilogue meant being an outsider. At RioOnWatch, however, gringos were in the majority and English was the dominant language. Thus, two of the larger barriers to my inclusion in other groups were not present for RioOnWatch. Not only was there a lack of barriers, but I was ideally placed to be included in this group, made up of immigrants from Western countries. Most volunteers, and some of the staff, were graduates and postgraduate students with an interest in Brazil and urban issues, or students studying abroad in Rio. We were all experiencing a range of things together, from the specific politics of urban space in Rio de Janeiro to everyday quirks of Brazilian culture and missing the comforts of home. The degree to which I became a part of this group meant my interests, as I pursued my open-ended questions, tended to align with RioOnWatch's interests, helping to focus my attention on how Vila Autódromo was talked about for an international audience.

Within RioOnWatch, I quickly took on the Vila Autódromo beat, particularly in January 2016 when the intern who had been covering the favela before I arrived

left. I therefore contributed to a range of articles about the favela, frequently co-authoring articles with others (I provided the background information and context, while they contributed specifics for the news story). I was also the group's expert on all things Olympic, writing several essays on the common issues in Olympic cities. Particularly in the latter stages of fieldwork, I would take an active role in group meetings when these two issues came up, contributing my knowledge to the discussion. Finally, and of crucial importance to my sanity throughout fieldwork, RioOnWatch provided me with a good group of friends with whom I could discuss things in English (from the specifics of my research to the latest premier league scores), a crucial space allowing me to step out of the craziness of Rio, even for just a few moments. These moments were also an important space for testing my ideas and discussing them with others who were interested and knowledgeable about favelas and social sciences.

The Comitê Popular, in some regards, was the opposite of RioOnWatch for meI was tolerated at Comitê Popular meetings, not welcomed per se, perhaps because I was seen as yet another researcher (it was once remarked to me that there were more researchers than activists on the Comitê) who had little to contribute to the struggle. This, in contrast to RioOnWatch, certainly formed part of the reason for withdrawing somewhat from the Comitê Popular. When I attended Comitê events I tended to sit quietly and listen, speaking only to introduce myself and when other questions were asked of me. In part, this was due to my issues understanding Portuguese at the beginning of fieldwork, leaving me struggling to follow the conversation, let alone participate. The following except from field notes illustrates my feelings of being unwelcome:

A key member of the Comitê, Leticia is a postgraduate student at the Institute of Regional and Urban Planning and Research (IPPUR) at the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro (UFRJ). She provides updates to Comitê meetings on Vila Autódromo's struggle in much the same way I do at RioOnWatch meetings. She is almost always in Vila Autódromo for Occupy events, frequently helping to organise such events along with residents and other activists. Like her, these activists intimately involved

with organising events tend to be young, white middle-class women, many of them students, often living in Rio's wealthy South Zone. She is in her mid to late twenties, standing at around five and a half foot tall with long brown hair.

I first met many of the Comitê Popular at a public debate about racism and militarization outside the council chambers. I went with a fellow RioOnWatch volunteer who was in Rio doing fieldwork for her Master's thesis, who had been working with the Comitê for a while and introduced me. After the debate, several members of the Comitê head to a nearby bar a few minutes away. A few of us grab a table as someone goes to the bar to buy beer and get glasses. Nine glasses (one for each person present) are set down on the table, along with two bottles of beer. Leticia, wearing a white Vila Autódromo T-shirt and square black glasses, picks up a bottle and, following the cultural norm, pours beer for those sat around the table, going around the table anti-clockwise. I am the last person without beer and instead of pouring for me, she sets the bottle down on the table and turns away, deep in conversation with another member of the group. This, whether intentional or accidental, I took as a symbolic rejection, a subtle way of marking me out as not part of this group.

As mentioned above, after attending meetings for the first couple of months of my fieldwork, I began to withdraw from the Comitê after returning from Curitiba in January. This was not a deliberate, planned strategy, more an accidental removal as other things, particularly the threat of demolitions in Vila Autódromo, seemed more pertinent to my emerging research questions. Given my focus on the portrayal of Vila Autódromo internationally, RioOnWatch's weekly meetings became more important that the Comitê's. Given my specific focus on Vila Autódromo, discussion at events in the favela and in groups on Facebook and WhatsApp set-up to co-ordinate support for residents were more relevant than the Comitê meetings. Finally, the Comitê began hosting monthly meetings under the banner Jogos da Exclusão (Exclusion Games) to organise protest during the Games – monthly meetings were more manageable amid my busy schedule and attending the weekly meeting was not helping me develop the research further.

I was never going to be accepted as part of the group of Vila Autódromo residents. As a relatively wealthy gringo, particularly a gringo whose intention wasn't to live permanently in Rio, it would have been impossible to be seen as a resident by others. I did not attempt to move into the favela as people were being evicted and to even ask about the possibility of taking up room in an ever shrinking community, when long-standing members of the community were being forced to leave by the lack of room, would have had a detrimental impact on my relationship with residents and activists. Instead, I never sought to be part of this group, but sought to participate in their struggle alongside residents, living their struggle together with them. Within this large group there were a few key voices: Erika, Tobias, Amanda and others who were vocal in their opposition to removals. They claimed to speak for the wider group of residents who refused to leave Vila Autódromo, as many residents continued to work and had little time for activism. Many of these residents, while continuing to refuse to negotiate with the municipal government, were not actively involved in resisting eviction, and thereby sit somewhat outside the focus of this thesis. This is in part due to the limited access I had to this group, who were often not present at the events I attended. On the limited occasions when I spoke to these residents who were not at the forefront of activism, they tended to repeat the familiar lines of those leaders and when journalists asked to speak with them they tended to refer the journalists to the more established voices, suggesting that these key activists spoke on behalf of others.

Often my acceptance by these leaders came after a particular event. After playing on Vila Autódromo's football team after Tobias' invitation (as described in chapter 4), Tobias was very open with me. On my next visit to the favela, showing a group of American university students around, he greeted me differently to the other RioOnWatch intern (who had attended the football tournament, but not played), giving me a hug rather than just a pat on the shoulder. Over the following months, I developed a good relationship with Tobias. Frequently, when journalists were clamouring to talk to Erika or Amanda, I would chat quietly with Tobias about what was going on. Similarly, Erika became even more welcoming to me after I'd spent a

few nights sleeping in her home (along with many others) to defend against early morning demolitions (see chapter 5). There were many activists who supported the struggle and residents often forgot specific faces, but spending this night in her home solidified her memory of who I was, as she introduced me to others at times as one of the people who defended her home. As discussed in the epilogue, she considered me to be part of the struggle, not just a pesky observer. These key events, akin to Geertz' (1972) famous flight from the police at the Balinese cockfight, served to demonstrate my intentions to residents and build a bond between us. Nevertheless, I was always an outsider, more so than the local activists who were supporting the struggle. While I built a level of familiarity and trust that far exceeded that of parachuting journalists, there were always things that remained off limits to me, inaccessible. For example, as her home was being demolished, Erika locked herself inside the community church, making clear she didn't want to show her face in this moment of deep distress.

In this, I became part of a broad group referred to as supporters of Vila Autódromo. This term included all those who attended events in the favela but were not residents (or former residents), including RioOnWatch volunteers, Comitê Popular activists and others, including university students and other social movements. With the defining characteristic being attendance at events, this was not a structured group in the way the other groups described here are. This is a group I was clearly a part of and the welcoming behaviours of residents discussed in the following chapters helped me feel welcome. The terms of inclusion were markedly more open within this group, with my inclusion clearly demonstrated in the following vignette:

As the backhoe rolls in to Vila Autódromo to demolish the hub of the favela, the residents association, a few activists try to block its path by standing in the road and holding hands. The backhoe just drives around them, over the rubble where a house used to stand and proceeds to smash down the walls of the football pitch to get at the residents association building. The activists have moved away from the demolition but are still holding hands and, along with others, they form a circle.

Momentarily stuck between joining the circle or photographing the demolition – the ethnographers dilemma between participating or observing – the decision is reached for me as a hand stretched out from the circle towards me, inviting me in. I take Leticia's hand and join the circle, joining in with the chants – "upgrades now, the Vila will stay" and "*Olim…piada*"[8] as the residents association is reduced to rubble. Leticia is holding my hand tightly as she weeps softly. Looking around the circle, I see many others with tears rolling down their faces and I begin to cry myself.

This inclusion stands in direct contrast to the symbolic exclusion at the bar after the meeting of the Comitê Popular. Within the context of Vila Autódromo, everyone who resisted removals was welcome. This supporters group was organised more loosely than others, but that does not mean it wasn't organised. Facebook was a crucial site for organising and disseminating information about upcoming events, often facilitated by residents and members of the Comitê Popular. A WhatsApp group was set up to help communicate directly about the daily situation of residents living in the favela. The heavy involvement of Comitê Popular members playing important roles in these virtual spaces was a further factor in my stopping attending their meetings, as I was seeing what they were doing in relation to Vila Autódromo in these spaces.

Throughout this, I took on multiple roles when participating in events, being simultaneously ethnographer, activist, journalist, translator and fixer. Without exception, I was always an ethnographer first and fulfilled the other roles only when they were useful and appropriate for furthering the ethnography. Being activist not only helped me to understand what it is to be an anti-Olympic activist, but also served to reinforce whose side I was on, building trust between myself and other activists. Similarly, performing the role of a journalist, writing about the favela for RioOnWatch and other outlets allowed me to contribute to the movement in an appropriate and useful way, fulfilling what Gillan and Pickerill

[8] *Olimpíada* is Portuguese for Olympics, while *piada* is the word for joke

(2012) call the ethic of immediate reciprocity: immediately reciprocating activists for time lost to my research with the benefits of publicity. In this, I was also a witness to events, with the presence of a gringo with a camera phone in the favela increasing the likelihood of bad press for the municipal government, potentially affecting the calculus about the level of violence that could be tolerated. Acting as a translator and fixer for journalists visiting the favela allowed me to gain crucial access to the process of research as performed by journalists, observing first-hand the way they shape their reports through engagement with the favela.

Much of this chimes with recent discussion of public sociology, wherein sociologists should, in Marx's (2005 [1845]) view, seek to change the world. As Burawoy (2005) observes, sociologists became more concerned with fighting for the recognition of the discipline and too often ended up reinforcing the power structures that sociology should challenge. This critique applies particularly to the sociology of sport, where too many academics are more concerned with upholding the status quo than with building a fairer world (see Carter, Burdsey and Doidge 2018). Thus, in public sociology, it is the task of the sociologist to bring the discipline's knowledge to bear in contexts where it can help to change lives. It is in this respect that I approached writing as a journalist, seeking to translate private troubles into public issues (see Mills 1959) to help create pressure for change.

Within this work for social change, there exists a tension "between complete submersion in movement struggles, versus a mythical position of objective analytic detachment" (Johnston and Goodman 2006: 9). This, in part, relates to the broader discussion of whose side sociology is on, as discussed in the introduction. In relation to studies of activism, some have argued for militant ethnography for which the primary goal is to support the movements (see Apoifis 2017). This thesis is not a militant ethnography, rather I seek to play the role of a "supportive interlocutor" (see Desai 2013: 106), bringing sociological tools to the understanding of activism while acknowledging that this is of limited use to the movement as a whole. As such, my contributions to the movement, whether through participating in events, writing for an international audience or analysing the struggle sociologically, remain

marginal and limited. These tensions between participating and analytic detachment are discussed in more detail in the epilogue.

Writing ethnography

As explained in the previous section, analysis began well before I returned from Rio and sat down to write this thesis. When I returned I already had a broad idea of what the thesis would look like, telling the story of how Vila Autódromo made international headlines through discussion of different groups. I was familiar with my data, had generated codes and searched for themes, as well as reviewing these themes through discussions with activists: four of Braun and Clarke's (2006: 87) had already been completed. I plotted out how the thesis could take shape, drawing out vignettes from my field notes which helped explain the issues I identified. Initially, I planned for the ethnography to tell the story of one week, the week in which the resident's association had been demolished. Over discussion of four days in this week, I would explain how four different groups (residents, local activists, RioOnWatch, international journalists) interacted and worked towards a larger goal of using sympathetic media coverage of the favela's struggle to pressure the municipal government.

This drew out several important themes: that residents of Vila Autódromo were exceptionally welcoming to guests at Occupy events, including, whether consciously or not, speaking Portuguese in an easily understandable way. The Comitê Popular helped organise and publicise these Occupy events through their networks with social movements, as well as on social media, along with support from other local activist groups and local academics (many of whom were members of the Comitê). RioOnWatch, given its position as a local news source that published in English, was able to steer the English-language conversation around favela evictions, through their own reporting on events and facilitating mainstream media reporting of favelas, playing a pivotal role linking favela residents to international journalists. Those journalists had their own concerns, but were often hampered by the realities of parachute journalism giving them little time to research their stories and

demanding a quick turnaround for stories, creating opportunities for activists, particularly RioOnWatch, to be influential.

This was the thrust of the analysis I presented for my transfer from MPhil to PhD, alongside field notes illustrating these points. In the oral defence of that work, one of my examiners perceptively asked “what about space?”, leading me to a whole new conceptual framework for the thesis. This corresponds to Braun and Clarke’s (2006) naming of themes. I spent months poring over books and articles on space, place and social movements, thinking about how these geographical concepts could be applied to the case at hand. Resident’s welcoming behaviours and the scene-setting engaged in when organising events became part of the construction of space, while discussion of this online and in media outlets became spreading a sense of place. The themes and codes I had identified were thus tied together by these concepts about what the space/place of Vila Autódromo is and how it is constructed and shared.

With this new overarching thematic structure, as the initial plan I had crafted for the transfer began to evolve it became less and less tenable to bring illustrative vignettes from just one week of fieldwork. The issues of producing space were far better explored at major Occupy Vila Autódromo events, like the football tournament or the cultural festival, than in this week. Thinking about these events as a site of placemaking led me to analyse these events more directly as inversions of norms, as carnivalesque, as liminal. The chapters on RioOnWatch and the media seemed to make more sense as one chapter, as a discussion of the links and influence between these groups, drawing on fieldwork data of working with journalists in the favela. The process of arriving at this construction of theory was built through a process of writing and rewriting, always interrogating the field notes while searching for a deeper level of analysis, or, as Braun and Clarke (2006) put it, writing the report.

The process of writing also threw up some complex ethical decisions. Prior to fieldwork I had committed to keeping those I worked with anonymous, due to the

open-ended nature of the research and the historical propensity for violence on the part of Brazil's military police (see Scheper-Hughes 1992; Goldstein 2003; Perlman 2010; Robb Larkins 2015). When discussing my research with people in the process of gaining verbal informed consent, I explained that their names would be replaced with pseudonyms to protect their identities, in line with standard ethical guidance (see BSA 2017). In practice, when I came to write the thesis, ensuring anonymity proved exceptionally difficult. Many of those with whom I worked were public figures, written about (and indeed writing themselves) in the media. I had, during fieldwork, thought of these articles as part of a dataset that could be drawn on to illustrate my points, but in the process of writing, I realised quoting from publicly available sources would compromise anonymity – this has in turn impacted on the prominence of quoted speech in the following chapters. Many of the people discussed in this research were prominent figures on the local activist scene, who could be recognised by their words and actions. Simply giving those individuals' pseudonyms would not ensure anonymity, as others involved in the struggle would surely be able to recognise them. This presents a dilemma – if these figures are well known, how can they be made anonymous?

I considered a range of approaches to resolving this dilemma. Others who have written about anti-Olympic activism have used the real names of those they spoke to in their research (see for example Boykoff 2014; Lenskyj 2002). Such an approach is appealing, but would be a breach of trust with those I worked with, who were told they would be given pseudonyms for the reasons outlined previously and such a breach of trust would be ethically unacceptable (see BSA 2017). I considered giving the entire episode of contention a pseudonym, changing the name of the favela and other details to obscure the identities of those involved. However, the proximity to the Olympic park, which resulted in the exceptionally high level of media coverage given to Vila Autódromo would mean to ensure anonymity through such means would obscure much of the valuable contribution this research makes. I also considered splitting the individual's into several composite characters, or merely referring to them as "a resident" or "an activist", which would go some way to ensure individual anonymity while ensuring that the account remained truthful

(see Ellis 2007: 16). Such an approach though, would further obscure voices and present residents and activists as monolithic blocs with little room for disagreements within the groups. I took this approach in parts, where anonymity was particularly important to avoid disrupting existing relationships, when explicitly discussing disagreements within groups, for example. However, the necessity of providing a clear voice for activists and residents mean this approach would not be suitable across the thesis.

As such, I returned to the use of pseudonyms. While this is of course imperfect as it does not guarantee insiders (including other researchers and perhaps even journalists) will not be able to recognise individuals, it will serve to diminish the likelihood of reprisals from the state. Writing, as I did, in the knowledge that insiders will be able to recognise the people in the research forced me, drawing on Scheper-Hughes (2000), to write about these people with the same courtesy, empathy and friendship that I extended to them in the field. As such, the potential for harm to participants by other insiders being able to recognise them is significantly lessened.

Conclusions

This chapter has explored the methodological approach taken in this research. This ethnographic research seeks to understand how the contention over a small patch of land in Rio de Janeiro made international headlines and the political ramifications of this. In doing the research, I worked with a range of groups, including residents of Vila Autódromo, other activists who supported those residents, RioOnWatch and the Comitê Popular, as well as dialoguing with international journalists. This did not involve formal interviews, as this would have altered my relationship with activists, jeopardising the privileged access I had worked to attain. While this did create a certain reliance on paraphrasing speech in the early months of fieldwork, short quotes were recorded, particularly in the latter stages of fieldwork. This was also impacted by my command of Portuguese, which as I explained, was imperfect in the opening months of fieldwork, but quickly

developed as I grew accustomed to the Carioca accent and slang. This data was analysed thematically over the course of the research, not divorced from the process of collecting data as analysis is sometimes presented and I illustrated how this thematic analysis was conducted concurrently with the collection of data. Finally, I delved in detail into the ethical dilemmas I faced when anonymising activists, being careful not to breach the trust of those I worked with while protecting them from potential harm that publication of this work could bring, ultimately resting on the imperfect solution of using pseudonyms. In the following chapters, I delve into the results of this methodological work.

In chapter four I discuss how the space of Vila Autódromo was produced at Occupy Vila Autódromo events and how this requires us to slightly rethink Lefebvre's (1991) analytical triad for conceptualising informal communities. In chapter five I explore how this space, produced at Occupy events, was transformed into place, drawing on Victor Turner's (1969) conceptual triad of liminality, communitas and anti-structure, as well as considering how this place was manifested on social media. Chapter six expands on the previous discussion by examining how this notion of place was spread globally through international media outlets, particularly focussing on the processes of negotiation and persuasion between RioOnWatch and international journalists. The final empirical chapter examines how this contest over defining space and place played out and the implications for human rights, in particular the right to housing and the right to the city. We begin then, at a football tournament in December 2015, part of a series of Occupy Vila Autódromo events.

Chapter 4: Space as Resistance

Vila Autódromo is hosting the *Taça Libertadores* (Liberators Cup) football tournament today and I am making the two-hour journey to the community with the intention of writing a report for RioOnWatch, along with a friend. We struggle slightly getting to Vila Autódromo, going a different route to the one I'd taken before, going first to the Alvorada bus terminal in Barra da Tijuca planning to catch a bus to the favela from there. At the terminal we discover that there are no direct buses from there to Vila Autódromo: when we asked an attendant for help in getting there his response was simply "fuck man, that's hard". Unable to find a bus out to this apparently remote location, we take a taxi for the last section of the journey. As we arrive in the community, I'm surprised by how much things have changed since I was last here only a few weeks ago. A permanent barricade is on the road stopping works trucks from using the roads in the community, erected in protest a few weeks ago. There are gaps where there had previously been buildings. The space of Vila Autódromo is constantly changing, with new demolitions a regular occurrence.

In this chapter, I explore how residents actively shaped the space of the favela, promoting spatial meanings associated with homeliness, community and friendliness. In doing so, residents were engaged in a discursive contest over the nature of favelas, challenging the conceptualisation of favelas as dangerous, poverty-stricken slums which underpins the policy of eviction. Through events organised as part a campaign known as Occupy Vila Autódromo, residents carved out moments in which they could articulate their community on their own terms, challenging the logic behind the municipal government's policy of displacement. During these events, the community was vibrant and alive, in stark contrast to the "sense of abandonment" that existed in the community otherwise. Residents were not the only actors producing space in Vila Autódromo, as the municipal government sought to exert its influence to shape the favela (or perhaps more accurately, to remove it). This chapter examines these contested constructions of

space in Vila Autódromo. The following section describes a football tournament organised as part of the Occupy Vila Autódromo campaign, before I discuss Lefebvre's conceptualization of space in relation to favelas. I then move on to discuss how the movement produced space as part of their contestation of evictions before concluding the chapter.

Taça Libertadores da Vila Autódromo

A few people are standing around chatting in front of the residents' association, so we go up and introduce ourselves. A guy in his late forties sporting a purple baseball cap seems to be in charge; he introduces himself as Tobias. The baseball cap covers trimmed black hair and he is well built, clearly an impressive athlete in his youth. His face is unusually expressive; his smile warms the heart while his frowns break it. His dark brown skin is unmarked, with wrinkles only just beginning to show on his hands. Players arrive in dribs and drabs, heading to the small football pitch boxed in by crumbling walls and fencing behind the residents' association to warm up. The vast majority of the visiting players are white, while the Vila Autódromo residents team is an even mix of mulattos and afro-Brazilians. All the players are men, although there are a few women here to enjoy the football and support their friends and partners.

We head round to the pitch too, following Tobias. As he pumps up a ball, I mention that we are from RioOnWatch and that we will write a report about the tournament. He becomes visibly more comfortable, speaking very highly of other members of RioOnWatch who have been here. He says he's happy to talk to us because we are helping their struggle. He tells us a little about himself, including that he's lived here for twenty-three years. I ask him what the event is for, and he explains that "the idea forms part of a wider strategy", aiming to emphasise that "Vila Autódromo lives, exists, and resists". In essence, this event is about "giving visibility" to the vibrant community that exists in this space, welcoming visitors to the favela to show that it isn't "abandoned".

Tobias heads off to organise drinks for everyone, and we chat to a guy from one of the teams. His team is called *Peladas da Esquerda*, or players[9] of the left and is formed to play for fun as a political statement, hence "of the left". A couple of other teams have arrived too: *Radical Contra* are a group who, like the *Peladas da Esquerda*, play informal football across the State of Rio de Janeiro with political motives, and *Remo(vidas)*[10], a group of students who came to play football and support the community. When everyone is ready, the four teams (including the Vila Autódromo team) gather in front of the residents' association to agree the rules for the tournament, with some debate about the length of games due to the strong heat. *Peladas da Esquerda* (white with green and red highlights) and *Radical Contra* (black with thin white stripes) both have their own kit, while the Vila Autodromo use light blue Fluminense vests and *Remov(vidas)* play topless.

Tobias points out where the toilets are and shows everyone a cool box full of ice, beer and coca cola to which everyone was welcome, having contributed R$10 (around £2) each. He also told us that there would be a *churrasco*[11] here after the football, also paid for by this small fee. During the game, one of the players from one of the other teams officiates: although the referee is fairly redundant, fouls tend to be admitted to, even without appeal from the other players. The atmosphere is convivial, with the humdrum sound of construction work in the Olympic park next door frequently drowned out by the shouts of players and laughter among spectators. Breaks between games last longer than the 15-minute games themselves, with players (and spectators) getting drinks and using a water hose to cool off, getting a brief respite from the burning summer sun. The tournament here couldn't stand in starker contrast to the Olympics which will take place a few hundred metres away, eight months from now.

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[9] "pelada" is a slang term, usually meaning a football game: specifically a non-competitive, recreational game with loose informal rules. In this case, the term is used to refer to footballers who play this form of the game.

[10] "Removida" means removed or evicted, while "vida" means life: these brackets formed a deliberate pun emphasizing the impact of evictions on lives.

[11] "churrasco" is a traditional Brazilian barbecue. Meat is normally chopped into small pieces and passed around, making for a particularly social dining experience

Figure 4.1: A game underway: "Carlos Carvalho (local real estate developer), we are not poor, you are poor". December 2015.

I'm offered the chance to play on the *Peladas da Esquerda* team, but I decline, saying it far too hot. It's around 35 degrees in the shade, but I'm more worried that the quality of these teams, particularly the *Peladas da Esquerda* and *Radical Contra* is far higher than my own (non-existing) footballing talents. Shortly afterwards, Tobias again asks if I want to play. I make some pretty non-committal noises and Tobias eventually persuades me to play, giving me one of the vests the Vila Autódromo team are using. As we head over to the pitch, Tobias asks if I play "back" or "front" and I respond "back" in an attempt to reduce the amount of running I'll need to do. I get into a huddle with the rest of the Vila Autódromo team and Tobias gives a short team talk, explaining that we'll play with two at the front and two at the back, and stressing the importance of keeping them under pressure all over the pitch. Tobias' insistence on including me in the games is characteristic of the inclusive atmosphere of Occupy Vila Autódromo events.

Even though the event was advertised as a five-a-side tournament, *Radical Contra* seem to have ten or eleven players here, with those who aren't playing sitting and chatting with others who've come to watch the Games and enjoy the day. After recovering from the game, I take some food and join in the conversation with some of the players: naturally, we talk football. After briefly discussing the fall and fall of

my team, Manchester United, one of the *Peladas da Esquerda* players asks about FC United of Manchester (see Brown 2008) so I explain a little to approving nods from the listening crowd of six or seven players. FC United is a team created by Manchester United fans in protest at the commercialisation of football, based on similar principles of participation on show here in the favela today.

As we talk, I ask the players why they had come today. One of the *Remo(vidas)* players explained that this isn't his first time here:

> I, at least, already came to other events. I have followed the resistance of Vila Autódromo and, hey, to play football, to celebrate this year of resistance, of struggle, to end the year well, with a light mood, I've seen very heavy things here…

To the same question, a *Radical Contra* player explains:

> Because in truth, the team was created with the intention to be on the political left. Because in truth, in these places, we are very well received, normally.

These teams have made the long journey to the favela today for two main reasons. Partly, they came to support the resistance movement in the favela, broadly agreeing that these evictions are wrong. They have also come, however, for enjoyment; to enjoy the day playing football, drinking beer and eating *churrasco* in a friendly, welcoming atmosphere. It is difficult to separate these two motivations for making the trip to the favela, they remain entangled and to some extent they are connected by the emphasis on comradely participation in place of oppositional competition.

The games have finished, with *Peladas da Esquerda* beating *Radical Contra* in the final, and the *churrasco* is well underway with food passed around as the players and residents drink beer and socialise. Tobias stands up to present the trophy and

give a short speech. Many more residents have arrived now, including Tobias' wife Erika, a leading figure in the campaign against evictions. Surely no more than five foot tall and fifty kilos in weight, Erika is living proof that people are far more than just their bodies: she has become an almost inspirational figure among activists. This seems to be due to a combination of her steadfast determination to remain in her home, her erudite way of speaking publicly about the evictions process and her seemingly endless optimism and joy. Originally from the Northeast of Brazil, she moved to Rio as a young girl, living in Rocinha, before moving to Vila Autódromo with her husband Tobias. Her small, wiry frame, her short, curly black hair and the wrinkles of her light brown skin display a frailty of body which belies her fortitude. Tobias holds a cheap plastic trophy which had been decorated by one of Vila Autódromo's stickers, cut up to fit nicely on the small trophy.

Figure 4.2: The trophy: "Long live Vila Autódromo". December 2015.

Before presenting this trophy to the winning team, Tobias gives a short speech to the assembled crowd of some thirty people, detailing the community's struggle and speaking about the importance of Occupy Vila Autódromo events:

> This campaign gives us courage, because we feel that we aren't here alone and we aren't abandoned. Because whoever comes here to our community, it has a sense of abandonment, it has a sense of a community that already surrendered, and this is not true.

To clarify, Tobias is saying here that most days, when there are no events in the favela, it appears abandoned, as if the community has surrendered, but during these events the community appears vibrant and alive. By organising the space of Vila Autódromo as a vibrant, friendly community for these events, residents and visitors challenge the everyday "sense of abandonment" Tobias speaks of. He continues explaining the legal issues and protections the community has and the way these have been ignored, in great detail. During his speech, Erika heckles and tells him to stop going on so people can eat and drink, a wide smile beaming across her face. Once the trophy has been awarded, residents take photos to post on the community Facebook page before everyone returns to the *churrasco* and beers. Chatting to Tobias afterwards, he is keen to do another football tournament, saying "it's a good event, people enjoy the game, the food, the drinks and the socialising", placing particular emphasis on the social aspect of the event.

This football tournament was part of a series of events held in Vila Autódromo, a campaign known as Occupy Vila Autódromo. Other events included book launches, musical performances, documentary screenings, and catholic masses. Held in the favela, these events served to highlight the continued existence of the community. As detailed in the Popular Plan (AMPVA 2016: 49), "the presentation of bands, film projection, theatre, exhibitions, graffiti, etc. provided new ways to reaffirm the [community] life built over the years and its right to remain". As an activist from the Comitê Popular told Record News at one event, "one of the tactics which city hall

seeks to use is to create an extremely hostile environment that obliges residents to accept compensation and leave" (Rocha 2015). The Occupy Vila Autódromo events, characterised by festive celebrations of the community, served as an antidote to this tactic: as Tobias said, it gave residents courage to continue resisting.

In this chapter, I will argue that the political significance of these events was derived not only from the events themselves, but from the space in which they occurred. This space was constructed as a welcoming, friendly space, challenging the logic of removals. This was contested by the actions of the state, which sought to make the favela an inhospitable environment through a combination of demolitions and psychological pressure. By holding events in the favela, residents drew attention to their struggle on their own terms, as opposed to attention gained when the municipal government demolished homes. To begin, we first need to revisit spatial theory and the work of Henri Lefebvre to draw out how his theorising on space applies to informal communities such as Vila Autódromo.

Lefebvre in the favela

Space, as Henri Lefebvre convincingly argued, is social. It is imbued with social meaning through the practice of individuals and groups within space and their construction (both physical and social) of space. As discussed in chapter 2, Lefebvre (1991) employed an analytical triad of spatial practice, representations of space, and representational spaces to understand how meaning is socially created and ascribed to space. Spatial practice, also termed perceived space, refers to the way societies attach meaning to spaces through everyday social life and bound up with the complex power relations which exist in modern societies (Martin and Miller 2003). Meaning is generated through social interaction in and with urban spaces, imbuing them with meaning(s). In essence, space is socially constructed, with all the complex relationships between structural constraints and social agency that characterise social constructions (see Giddens 1984).

Conceived space, or representations of space, refers to the 'official' meanings ascribed to spaces. For Lefebvre, these meanings are imbued through both the physical production of built space and dominant power relations which privilege certain understandings of space (Soja 1996: 60-70). For example, high walls can be understood as a signifier of private space. Perceived and conceived space illustrate the potential for a single space to hold conflicting meanings and it is in lived space, or representational space, that these conflicting meanings are contested. Representational space then, is "seen by Lefebvre both as distinct from the other two spaces and as encompassing them" (Soja 1996: 67). This chapter, in Lefebvre's (1991) terms, examines the lived space of Vila Autódromo by examining the contest between perceived and conceived space in the favela.

Yet before we turn to the case of Vila Autódromo, we must further interrogate these theoretical tools. This triumvirate holds particular complexities for conceptualising the urban landscape of Rio de Janeiro, specifically favelas. Lefebvre's analysis is based upon European cities, particularly Paris. This is problematic when applying his theoretical ideas to cities across the Global South where informal communities are far more common. In particular, Lefebvre implies an 'official' understanding of space, a pre-planned meaning intended for urban space. This is set against understandings of space which are "clandestine or underground", contesting the 'official' meaning of space. As Merrifield's (1993: 525 emphasis in original) summarises, for Lefebvre "space is always set to a particular *conceived* representation because it is the dominant conception", the conception of the state. In essence, Lefebvre assumes a conflict between what we might call popular meanings and 'official' meanings attached to material urban space, and sets the 'official' meanings in clear dominance. This is based on the architectural design of built space conforming to 'official' desires: the state can physically design spaces to engender particular meanings. While contestation of these meanings is possible based on social action and small, temporary changes to material space such as street art, 'official' meanings are, quite literally, set in stone.

As such, Lefebvre's analytical tools cannot be applied easily to favelas where the physical space is designed and built organically from below. However, that residents build their own communities does not automatically give dominance to their preferred spatial meanings. As Penglase (2014: 69) observed "Lefebvre tends to see built spaces as reinforcing the dominance of structures of oppression [whereas in favelas] understandings of the neighbourhood were tools used for a variety of purposes, some reinforcing domination and others seeking to find spaces of autonomy and creativity". As such, considering informal communities using Lefebvre's triad reveals a deeper level of analysis which too often goes ignored; that is, by whom are spaces perceived and conceived. Lefebvre takes it as given that the state conceives space while the masses perceive space: the reality is far more complex and multi-faceted.

Applying this deeper analysis of space to the Vila Autódromo favela, then, sets up differing conceptions and perceptions of space, revealing a conflict inherent in favelas across Rio, Brazil, and in informal communities more generally. Through spatial practices, living in and adapting the space, residents made Vila Autódromo their home, a space of safety and security. The sign at the entrance to the community embodies these understandings of space, declaring that it has been "a peaceful and orderly community since 1967". Built through autoconstruction, a process by which the urban poor build their own houses in the periphery (Holston 1991), the physical form of the favela reflects this understanding of the space as a friendly and welcoming community. This understanding of the favela as a safe space can be seen in the lack of walls and fences compared to the formal city of Rio and particularly of the immediate surroundings of the middle-class Barra da Tijuca, where gated communities are the norm.

Conversely, 'official' narratives about favelas (representations of space in Lefebvre's terms) emphasise danger, poverty and criminality. By 'official', I refer to the understanding of favelas held by the Brazilian elite, discerned based on the views of residents and activists, media coverage and policy decisions. In this narrative, favelas represent dirt, impinging on the purity of the city, to use Mary Douglas'

(1966) terms. The formal city, planned and controlled by trained professionals, represents purity, with the messiness of the informal city posing a danger to this purity. The narrative about favelas put forward by activists and residents turns this on its head, with corruption in government and the judiciary posing a danger to the purity of communal life in favelas (and the city more broadly). In this official perspective, favelas are pollution, desecrating the *cidade maravilhosa*[12] with peril and destitution, in direct conflict with the image of the safe, modern, global city the municipal government wished to promote in the Olympic spotlight. As such, it follows, these impurities must be removed.

This narrative of favelas as dirt to be removed has been built up over many years. In the cultural arena, favelas have been portrayed as zones of violence both in Brazil and internationally through film, photography and video games (Allen 2017). Perhaps most notable among these cultural images of favelas is the Academy Award nominated *Cidade de Deus* (City of God), which documents the development and conflict of trafficking gangs in the eponymous favela. As Rial y Costas (2011) argues, the favela is presented as remote and distant, separated both physically and culturally from the asphalt. In recent years there has been a fetishization of favelas, Kertzer (2014) argues, with these communities used to demarcate products as Brazilian to international audiences. In this approach, the image of the favela is unconnected to the reality on the ground, with no attempt to capture the lived reality of informal communities. This, as I have argued with a colleague (Pilcher and Talbot 2017), can be applied to the sanitised image of the favela displayed in the Olympic opening ceremony. Whitewashing over the problematic aspects of life in favelas is similarly harmful for residents, producing no imperative for change while driving gentrification. In the case of Vila Autódromo, this narrative of favelas as zones of violence, poverty and insecurity underpins two key claims about the space of the community promulgated by the municipal government; that people do not want to live there, and that the people who live there are unlawful invaders. I will address each of these claims in turn.

[12] Rio's nickname, "the wonderful city"

When Rio's Mayor Eduardo Paes announced that twenty families would be able to stay on the land in newly built housing, he argued that the aggressive campaign of pressure and evictions was necessary (Michaels 2016). This was, in his view, because people who didn't really want to stay were refusing to move in order to gain larger compensation packages. Paes explained that he "had to keep [the plan] secret to avoid new arrivals in the Vila, looking for a chance to live in a just-upgraded neighbourhood" (Michaels 2016). He argued that this meant he had kept his regularly repeated promise that whoever wanted to stay could stay in the community. The narrative that residents wanted to leave was prominent in Brazilian media, which tends to view favelas as dirt to be removed from the city (Sánchez, Oliveira and Monteiro 2016). Yet this belies everything I experienced in the community: the dedication of residents to remain in their homes, even as they described the municipal government's "psychological terrorism". Many only left due to the pressures of living in the community as it was being demolished. One former resident told me that they regretted leaving, but explained that they had needed to leave for the good of their children, to not grow up in what was becoming an increasingly inhospitable location.

The accusation of being invaders is a common allegation faced by favela residents. In Tobias' speech before presenting the trophy at the football tournament, he touched on this, stating that "we are not invaders as the mainstream media sometimes says, in particular Globo already said this several times. We are a community of around 50 years, so it is clear that the invaders are those that are arriving now". The term invaders is used by those who seek to evict residents to emphasise the illegality of the settlement, implying that the community's claim to the land is illegitimate. The land itself is owned by the State of Rio de Janeiro, but is within the City of Rio de Janeiro. The community holds a 99-year lease to the land from the State, gained in a previous fight against eviction in the 1990's, as well as other legal protections (these will be discussed in greater detail in chapter 7. This gives Vila Autódromo a solid legal entitlement to use the land, a far stronger legal position than many favelas enjoy. Paes described such legal protections, which

thwarted his previous attempts to remove the favela, as the work of a political demagogue (Vettorazzo 2016), suggesting that these rights were granted illegitimately by the State of Rio de Janeiro. When it was initially built, nobody asked who owned the vacant land, but through the building of the community residents gained rights in a form of insurgent citizenship (Holston 2008), a concept which will be explored more fully in chapter 7.

These two narratives about favela space stand in conflict, a contradiction which I argue runs through all favelas and indeed informal communities more generally. The conflict between the "peaceful and orderly community" and the inhospitable slum inhabited by criminal invaders is played out in lived spaces, in spaces of representation. Sánchez, Oliveira and Monteiro (2016: 415) agree, arguing that "the official narratives and the resistance narratives may be regarded as part of the symbolic and political struggle for the territory of Vila Autódromo". In this same space, residents organise events like the football tournament to show that their community spirit exists. Simultaneously, the municipal government destroys homes and disrupts services such as bus routes, refuse collection, mail delivery, and even water and electricity to emphasise the illegitimacy of the community. The conflicted understanding of the space of Vila Autódromo is at the centre of the struggle to stay in the favela, with residents seeking to gain (or maintain) the legitimacy of their community. Before examining how this conflict played out however, it is first necessary to examine the relationship between spatial theory and social movements.

This questions Merrifield's (1993: 525 emphasis in original) assertion that "space is always set to a particular *conceived* representation because it is the dominant conception". As I have illustrated, and will continue to show through the rest of this thesis, space is not set to a particular dominant conceived representation. This, I have argued, is due to a narrow view taken by many Western spatial theorists that cities are planned and built by the state: a reality that is simply not the case in Rio de Janeiro and many other cities in Brazil and around the world, particularly in the Global South. Rather, space is constantly contested in favelas, with state and

community often cast in opposition. There is no clear 'dominance', or at least, dominance changes day by day, at times minute by minute, as the state and community constantly shape and redefine the favela. We now turn to the political implications of this contest over space.

Contentious space

Occupying public space is a common tactic for social movements. A great deal has been written on this strategy, particularly following major occupations around the world in 2011, from Tahrir Square to Zucotti Park (see Castells 2012; Gerbaudo 2012; Juris 2012; Kohn 2013; Frenzel, Feigenbaum and McCurdy 2014). These movements all took to iconic locations in city centres, using the highly visible public space to gain attention to their political message. As Kohn (2013: 99) puts it, Occupy Wall Street sought "to focus attention on growing levels of economic inequality by laying claim, physically and symbolically, to sites close to the nodal points of corporate power". This proximity to these key sites of corporate power gave increased visibility to activists occupy the space. Such spaces are transformed into spaces of protest through occupation, inscribing critiques of capitalism onto urban space (Juris 2012). As such, occupations function as representational space, or lived space, serving "as markers of protest movements; both in the external and internal view" (Frenzel, Feigenbaum and McCurdy 2014: 462) as conflicts between perceived and conceived space is played out.

Vila Autódromo, situated in a traditionally peripheral part of Rio de Janeiro became a highly visible space due to the construction of the Olympic park adjacent to the community. The proximate political opportunity, the particular political climate this change engendered (see Tarrow 1996; chapter 2 of this thesis) is somewhat paradoxical; activists fighting against eviction were emboldened and given new opportunities by the same change of circumstances which emboldened the municipal government and made possible new opportunities for eviction. Importantly, with Vila Autódromo geographically peripheral, the increased visibility only mattered when something was happening to draw people, particularly

journalists, to the favela. Occupy Vila Autódromo events can therefore be seen as the community's attempt to engage with the world on their own terms, instead of on the municipal government's terms as was the case when journalists travelled to the favela to report on demolitions. In the words of the *Remo(vidas)* player, Occupy events served to show the lighter side of the community instead of the "heavy" reality of evictions. The Olympics brought new threats of eviction, but also brought significant interest from around the world to Vila Autódromo. As such, the stakes were raised in the resistance to evictions in Vila Autódromo through global attention, with the favela becoming a symbol for Brazil's treatment of favelas, and the poor more broadly, in Rio's mega-event years. This point will be developed further in the following chapters, particularly chapter 6.

Despite the name Occupy Vila Autódromo, this campaign did not share the enduring occupations of its namesake Occupy Wall Street, or any of the occupation-based movements which have been heavily analysed by social movement theorists (Frenzel, Feigenbaum and McCurdy 2014). This was a campaign of single day events in the favela: not an enduring occupation with people moving into the favela for weeks and months. The use of the term occupy is a clear attempt to draw a link to the wider Occupy movement to generate support, both locally and international. A group of activists contesting the construction of the Olympic Golf course had called themselves "Occupy Golf", generating international headlines including "Occupy takes swing at Olympic golf course" (Douglas 2015), despite no link to the broader Occupy movement. Activists in Vila Autódromo used this protest 'brand' to generate attention for their cause, but these events were not occupations in the sense discussed by Frenzel, Feigenbaum and McCurdy (2014).

Social movement theory has historically ignored the spatial context in which contention occurs. Martin and Miller (2003: 144) convincingly argue that this ignores crucial elements of the social experience, suggesting that "the notion that there can be "non-spatial" processes [should be] viewed as sceptically as the notion that there can be non-historical processes". In response to McAdam, Tarrow and Tilly's (2001) call for greater engagement with spatial dimensions of contentious

politics, social movement theorists have begun to address this dearth of knowledge. I also address this call for deeper engagement with space throughout this thesis as, despite progress, space remains an under theorised element of social movement theory. In particular, many social movement theorists have underplayed the importance of space and place, focusing on the pre-existing meanings attached to certain geographical locations (see Frenzel, Feigenbaum and McCurdy 2014). In this, the political significance of the protest location is pre-existing: see for example Wall Street and capitalism or late 1999 Seattle and globalisation. I will push beyond this simplistic consideration of space and place to more comprehensively integrate spatial theory and contentious politics, focussing on how activists shape space for political means.

The significance of space inherent in occupations like Occupy Wall Street and the Arab Spring does apply in the case of Vila Autódromo; the symbolic meanings inscribed on the space give meaning to the events held there. What is different is that these meanings are not pre-existing connotations seized upon by activists: they have been actively constructed by residents and their supporters. In essence, the meanings inscribed on space become part of the performance of contentious politics, the making of "claims bearing on someone else's interests" (Tilly 2008: 5). While contentious politics encompasses a wide spectrum of social movement organising, including aspects of quotidian social life, I focus in this thesis on the public performances of claims. Specifically, this section discusses how residents and activists inscribed the claim that Vila Autódromo was a friendly, welcoming community and a good place to live onto the space of the favela.

After the agreement for new homes was made with the municipal government, these Occupy Vila Autódromo events did not stop, instead serving to pressure the government to keep their promises. In particular, a Museum of Removals was organised, with eight exhibits dotted around the community dedicated to different buildings and spaces, including the residents' association, several resident's homes and the children's play area. One of these exhibits was dedicated to *Espaço Ocupa* or "Occupy Space", with photos from Occupy events and the slogan *Urbaniza Já*, a

demand for upgrades which is discussed further in the following chapter. This exhibit (Figure 4.3) refers to a site within the community where most of the Occupy Vila Autódromo events occurred. Relatively central to the community, it included a raised platform which served as a stage for performances in the community, as well as a significant amount of open space around it, relatively clear of rubble.

Figure 4.3: "Espaço Ocupa" exhibit in the Museum of Removals. May 2016

Figure 4.4 shows the *Espaço Ocupa* in full swing during a cultural festival in November 2015 as a band plays to around a hundred people in the community. In the background, graffiti is scrawled across the walls of an abandoned building saying "my house" and "this is our home". Despite the cruel irony of such slogans written on an abandoned house, such messages served to construct the space of Vila Autódromo as a legitimate community to which people feel a sense of attachment. This is particularly illustrated by the use of the word "home" (*lar*) in place of the far more common but less emotive "house" (*casa*), adding connotations of belonging and community: this is perhaps even more telling than the English translation, with "*lar*" used exceptionally rarely in Brazil. Returning to the case of the football tournament, we can see how Tobias' point about the sense of abandonment inherent to the community applies. Without the revellers, the *Espaço Ocupa* appears abandoned and neglected, with claims of residence in graffiti appearing outdated and meaningless. As a backdrop to the festivities of the

cultural festival, however, such messages are more clearly statements of defiance, emphasising the legitimacy of the community.

Figure 4.4: Espaço Ocupa during the Cultural Festival. November 2015

The banners visible in Figure 4.4 draped across the buildings also serve to bolster the claim that Vila Autódromo is a legitimate community. One points out, for example, that the community gained the legal right to use of the land from the State in 1992, demanding that the Mayor respect the law. Similar messages were common in the community's omnipresent graffiti, detailing the various legal protections residents had won in previous struggles, which will be discussed in further detail in chapter 7. These messages, inscribed on the space of the community, challenged the notion that residents were "invaders" in the same way that Tobias did in his speech. In inscribing the legitimacy of the community onto the space, activists are directly contesting the municipal government's conceptualisation of the space as an illegal settlement.

These events were often fronted and led predominantly by women, who played a crucial role in resisting evictions. The dominance of women contributed to the homely space constructed in the favela during these events, playing traditional domestic roles of women, while also using the symbolic capital of the woman in distress to generate sympathy for the cause. While Tobias ostensibly organised the

football tournament described above, this event was unusual in having a man as the main resident organising the event and making speeches. Generally speaking, Occupy events involved speeches by women, usually both Erika and Amanda would speak, often followed by some combination of Luana, Ana and Naiara. Augusto was the only man who frequently spoke at events, as the residents association president, but he often restricted his speech to introducing others. Tobias could normally be found milling around, taking photos or recording videos, as in the event described in chapter 7, while another male resident, Ruda, would often provide logistical support such as arranging loudspeaker systems or helping to build platforms.

The spatial construction of Vila Autódromo was not only evident in the favela during the events of Occupy Vila Autódromo, but also in discussions of the events on social media, both before and after the event, a point I expand further in the following chapter. An event page was created on Facebook inviting participants to the tournament, stating that the event was being held because residents had recently renovated their pitch. This page included details for how to organise teams, but also made clear that people were welcome to come without a team and arrange a team in the favela: "the objective is that everyone takes part", with all welcome to come for beers and *churrasco*. This event page served to choreograph assembly not simply through the instructions regarding time, activity, team size and cost (R$10 for *churrasco*) but also setting the scene for a welcoming, friendly event by emphasising the objective for everyone to participate. These event pages also served to set the scene for an inclusive space in gendered terms, avoiding the problematic use of gendered terms in Portuguese[13]. As well as this, there were plans for "cold beers to close 2015 in high spirits", aiding in "the construction of an

[13] For example, taking a strictly grammatical interpretation, in Portuguese the word for everyone is "*todos*", but when all the people refered to are women the word becomes feminine: "*todas*". The presence of one man among a crowd of women would still, grammatically speaking, demand the use of the masculine term. Instead, these event pages used common feminist language to get around the implied dominance of men in the language, saying either "*Todos e todas*" to include both men and women equally, or "*todxs*", with the x used to remove gender from the word. These terms, particularly "*todxs*", are seen as contentious by some Brazilians, who feel that language is not inherently sexist.

emotional narration" (Gerbaudo 2012: 12) to frame the event. This scene-setting, as Gerbaudo (2012) argues, is crucial in shaping the character of mobilisations and therefore the space of protest events. After events, the communal spirit was celebrated and highlighted on social media. After a traditional *festa junina* party in June, a photo of myself with other RioOnWatch volunteers was posted on the Vila Autódromo Facebook page with the caption "in Vila Autódromo everyone is at home", emphasising the welcoming nature of the favela. I will return to this point in the following chapter.

Municipal government officials frequently denigrated those residents who resisted removal, suggesting they were merely seeking to increase the size of the compensation package they received. This was the justification Mayor Eduardo Paes offered when asked why he had refused to release details of his plan for the favela before March 2016. This argument not only serves to delegitimise those who were refusing to leave, it also implies that everyone wants to leave, that conditions in the favela are unfit for habitation. The Mayor's definition of those who wanted to leave included anyone who had begun negotiations for compensation. This included Naiara, who had begun negotiating after her home had been destroyed, planning to use her compensation to build a new home in the core of the community (the area which was not threatened by eminent domain).

Naiara is a large, elderly Afro-Brazilian woman who is strongly connected to her Afro-Brazilian heritage. As a Candomblé priestess, she practices a religion that was common among Brazil's slaves and draws its roots back to African tribal rituals (Prandi 1990). She was, until recently, a leading figure in the resistance to evictions, having travelled to Brasília to give evidence at the Brazilian Senate's human rights commission. Such resistance though has taken its toll on her health and she now walks with a cane, often supported by one of her adult children. Her home, on the banks of the lagoon, had been enclosed in the construction site, isolated from the rest of the community, for around a month prior to its demolition. When I wrote in a RioOnWatch article that the favela's church had been allowed to remain as it was well-built, she decried this as racism on Facebook. She pointed out that "in Vila

Autodromo there were many very strong buildings", and making the connection to her spiritual centre which had been demolished, arguing that the government was privileging Catholicism over Candomblé.

The suggestion by the municipal government that residents were holding out simply for higher compensation packages entirely ignored the possibility that the municipal government's valuation of the land differed from that of residents. A common phrase scrawled across the favela stated that "not everybody has a price": for residents, there was a value in the community that could not be bought. If the denigration of residents as invaders isn't a clear enough rejection of the legal rights of the favela won from the State government in previous struggles against removal, as mentioned above, Paes dismissed these rights as a "scrap of paper from a political demagogue" (Vettorazzo 2016).

The abandonment and neglect Tobias speaks of can be seen in Figure 4.5, a photograph of the *Espaço Ocupa* taken in March 2016 a few days before the Mayor announced his plans to rebuild the community, when no Occupy event was taking place. This photo also illustrates the constantly shifting physical space of Vila Autódromo, with the walls on which graffiti messages had been sprayed long since demolished. While residents of Vila Autódromo sought to inscribe meanings related to legitimacy, community and security on the space of the favela, these meanings were contested by the municipal government. In this sense, by demolishing buildings and leaving the rubble and debris where it fell, the municipal government structured the space as abandoned, illegitimate and unfit for habitation. Government action to shape the space was not limited to demolitions, with provision of services including mail delivery, refuse collection and even electricity to the favela also disrupted. Residents complained that when they called the relevant authorities to request the resumption of service to Vila Autódromo, the response was simply that "no-one lives there". As Sánchez, Oliveira and Monteiro (2016: 418) put it, "the accumulation of debris and the precariousness of the carriageways and of the water supply and sewage infrastructure… transformed life within the community".

Figure 4.5: Espaço Ocupa without an event. March 2016.

As the *Radical Contra* player told me when I asked why he had come to the event, guests were well received in Vila Autódromo. I was repeatedly struck by the courteousness of residents to visitors, particularly journalists: they always made a point to thank visitors to the favela and went out of their way to ensure visitors felt welcome and comfortable. The insistence by residents that I played football, despite my own reservations, is characteristic of the imperative to participate evident in Occupy Vila Autódromo. Likewise, the enjoyable and friendly spirit of the day – the light mood which the *Remo(vidas)* player spoke of – was typical at these events, also visible in Erika heckling Tobias, wanting to move on to enjoying the *churrasco*. After spending the day playing football and enjoying the mood, I'd gone to pick up my bag from where I'd left it by the side of a road and realised I'd not thought about it all day, even though it had my wallet with a significant amount of money inside. There is no other public space in Rio where I would have left my bag and money lying around out of sight all day without it even crossing my mind. Security and safety were taken as given at Occupy Vila Autódromo.

As such, this episode of contention was played out spatially, as a conflict over the meanings inscribed on the space. Activists realised that by contesting the nature of the space, they undermined the logic of removals. Residents emphasised the

legitimacy and vibrancy of their community as part of a wider struggle against favela evictions, using the platform they were provided by the adjacent Olympic construction to argue for housing rights across the entire city, country, and indeed world. Activists were fully aware that they had the opportunity to share their struggle internationally due to the favela's location directly next to the Olympic park. Occupy Vila Autódromo, then, was an attempt to exploit this proximate opportunity, recognising that unlike the public spaces occupied during Occupy Wall Street and the Arab Spring, this space is in the periphery of the city. By attracting people to the favela, activists sought to draw press attention, giving them an opportunity to spread their message on their own terms, outside the context of victimisation.

The spatial character of the favela is different when journalists travel to the community to report on demolitions. On February 24th, the residents' association was expected to be demolished and I spent the night in the favela to be there for the duration[14]. After I woke, I made my way to the area around the association building, where residents and supporters were holding a vigil. They hung banners and posters on the walls demanding a "social legacy" for the Olympic Games and thanking the international press for covering the story. A group of residents stood holding banners for the gaggle of photographers who had arrived, with their mouths gagged to represent the degree of influence they have had in reshaping their community. Residents talk to journalists about this demolition being unnecessary, questioning whether this building is really in the way of the Olympic Park.

At 7am, the space changes dramatically. The Municipal Guards arrive in numbers, literally bussed in to the favela. There is at least a hundred of them, with armour and batons (see Figure 4.6). Many activists seem to disappear, leaving to defend another building that was thought to be under threat. Papers are handed to Augusto, the association president, who examines them as the Municipal Guards

[14] This event is described in more detail in the following chapter

cordon off the building, slowly moving activists away with little resistance. As residents are shepherded away from the building Amanda shouts that “the association is more than a building” in defiance. As a backhoe rolls in, a few activists link hands and attempt to block its path. They are too few, and the backhoe simply drives around them. Nobody seems to be trying to stop the demolition. The building puts up little resistance, and is gone in under five minutes.

Figure 4.6: Municipal Guards blocking off the residents' association. February 2016.

Residents and their supporters are seen to be powerless in contrast to the power of the state. The space of the favela is transformed: no longer safe and welcoming, it feels tense and dangerous. The demolition papers given to the Augusto undermine residents’ claims that removals are illegitimate, clarifying that residents are not arguing that these demolitions are illegal; rather, they are arguing that the law is unjust. As such, the simplicity with which the building is destroyed lends credence to the accusation that residents are illegal invaders. After the Municipal Guards left, the rubble was still left in a heap, making the favela seem derelict and abandoned, undermining residents’ claims that this was a vibrant community. This is the standard mode of demolitions, with the government “leaving a trail of cracked buildings, broken sewage and water pipes, exposed rebars, mounds of demolition debris and multiple foci attracting rodents and insects” (Sánchez, Oliveira and Monteiro 2016: 419)

This taps into a wider degradation of the favela throughout the process of removals. Through removing various local services such as transport links, mail delivery, refuse collection and even electricity, the state created an inhospitable space for residents to live. The Municipal Guard often arrived unannounced to conduct demolitions or erect new walls in the community, cutting of homes and extending the land claimed by Olympic construction. This placed intense pressure on residents, who described not knowing whether their home would still be standing day to day as "psychological terrorism". Residents and their supporters only had warning that the residents' association would be destroyed from the Public Defenders who had been contesting the legality of the demolition order in court: the municipal government gave no advance notice. Several residents who had left told me that they did so for their children, as the favela had become an inappropriate place to raise a child, citing the rubble and Municipal Guards. Beyond this degradation of space, local elites envisioned a different future for the space on which the favela sat: real estate development. Real estate mogul Carlos Carvalho spoke openly of his desire to transform the area around the Olympic park into "a city of the elite… with noble housing, not housing for the poor" (Watts 2015). In this, they recast the space as one of real estate speculation and opportunity for profit, not housing.

When press attention is drawn to the community because of an eviction, it is difficult for residents to explain the positive aspects of life in the favela. The questions journalists are drawn to asking are related to the anguish, pain and suffering of those who remain, leaving little room to talk lucidly about the value of community life in the favela. As such, Occupy Vila Autódromo emphasised not just the legitimacy of the favela, but provided a platform for residents to share a positive vision of their community with journalists and activists. In particular, the space Occupy Vila Autódromo was imbibed with inclusivity, friendliness and security. In this, activist's contestation of removals went beyond the public justification for removals, challenging what they saw as the underlying logic of favela evictions: the view that favelas are pollution to be excised from the city.

This created a sense of place for Vila Autódromo, a process which is the focus of the following chapter. This allowed residents and activists to hold a clear notion of the inclusive, safe, community place of Vila Autódromo. This was crucial in contesting evictions. As the residents' association is being demolished, residents and their supporters are joining hands in a circle and chanting slogans against demolitions and the Olympic Games. Many around the circle, including myself, are crying as they do so. For me, I am thinking of happy memories of the football tournament held on the pitch behind the building. The friendly, inclusive community spirit is in my mind, despite the presence of a threatening number of Municipal Guards. Here, as I will argue more comprehensively in the following chapter, the sense of place forged during Occupy Vila Autódromo events freezes the meanings inscribed on space in the imagination of those taking part. In the following chapter, I will explore this process and begin to consider how this allows ideas about Vila Autódromo and the legitimacy of favelas to be spread across geographical scales. This multi-scalar view is further developed in chapter 6.

Throughout this episode of contention, residents and activists were participating in a wider contestation of the nature of favelas, challenging the underlying logic of evictions. In this, the mobilisation of the *Espaço Ocupa* was part of a wider struggle for the legitimacy of favelas (see chapter 6) and the right to housing (see chapter 7). While there are several similarities related to the symbolic value of space, this use of space is fundamentally different to that of Occupy Wall Street and Arab Spring in that activists are contesting the meaning of the space itself to serve a larger purpose. In the protest camps analysed by Frenzel, Feigenbaum and McCurdy (2014), space was used as a tool for amplifying the movement's message: in the case of Vila Autódromo, space was the message. Residents and their supporters were not simply resisting in space, they were resisting through space.

Conclusions

In this chapter we have seen how Lefebvre's conceptualisation of socially produced space holds specific complexities when considering favelas and informal communities. Lefebvre's analysis precludes the possibility that built space could be conceived and constructed by marginalised populations. By using the lesser used terms for Lefebvre's triad (perceived, conceived, and lived space) we see how the social production of space is contested, revealing a conflict of ideas which underlies all favelas. On the one hand, favelas are home to populations who would otherwise be homeless, representing an innovative use of space for communities who built their own homes and a strong sense of community and, in the case of Vila Autódromo, safety. On the other hand, favelas are dangerous places, illegal and illegitimate by their very nature, with poor infrastructure and endemic poverty, providing a haven for criminals. With these two narratives in dispute, the influence residents have in shaping the built space of the favela is crucial in this episode of contention. In Vila Autódromo, this conflict sprang to the surface in the attempt to evict the community, enforcing the 'official' perspective on the space which casts favelas as dirt to be removed. In short, the question at stake is the legitimacy of the favela as a form of housing and community.

In response to this, residents organised and resisted the attempt to remove their community. This contest over space is played out spatially, a battle fought over these conflicting meanings of space. Previous research on social movements has not fully appreciated this spatial dimension of contention. By constructing the space of the favela as welcoming, friendly and safe, residents undermined the municipal government's justifications for evictions. The government, for their part, sought to transform the space into an inhospitable environment through physical destruction as well as psychological pressure. The presence of the main Olympic park directly adjacent to Vila Autódromo brought greater visibility as well as stronger impetus for removal, raising the stakes of this episode of contention. This visibility, however, was only relevant for the resistance movement when something was happening in the favela: everyday life didn't attract press attention. As such the campaign of Occupy Vila Autódromo events became a crucial element of the movement in seizing the proximate political opportunity the Olympic Games

presented. These Occupy events and their significance for building support for the resistance movement will be discussed in more detail in the following chapter.

Chapter 5: Liminal Placemaking

As discussed in the previous chapter, Occupy Vila Autódromo events provided an opportunity for residents and activists to construct the space of the favela. In these moments, residents and activists were able to construct the space of Vila Autódromo free from contestation by the state. This was part of a wider contest over the nature of favelas in the Olympic city, with residents and activists contesting the justifications for regressive policies of removals and pacification. In this chapter, I will argue that the football tournament discussed in the previous chapter, along with the rest of the Occupy Vila Autódromo events, was liminal in character. The temporary inversion of social structures during these events created a temporally and spatially limited communitas, including anyone who came to support the community. As liminal events, these events were bound up with a rupture in social structure known as anti-structure, where there exists the possibility to modify, transform or destroy existing social structures (Turner 1969). As such, these events served to generate radical alternative possibilities for relations between the state and favelas.

Further, I will argue that these liminal events served to create a sense of the place of Vila Autódromo. As a reminder from chapter 2, space refers to the constantly changing and contested environment whereas place refers to solidified understandings of a location built over time: place refers to space "when it is caught in the ambiguity of an actualization" (de Certeau 1984: 117). Specifically, I argue that in a constantly changing space, Occupy Vila Autódromo events created a solidified notion of what the favela represented. This was important in the continued mobilisation of both residents, who spoke of feelings of hopelessness which these events addressed, and their supporters, who generated a clear sense of purpose and togetherness from their understanding of the favela, which shares some features of an imagined community (Anderson 1983). In particular, the liminal character of Occupy Vila Autódromo means this sense of place is bound with anti-structure, with a radical transformation of Brazilian structures of power implied. This sense of place, as well as fixing a set of ideas about the favela in the minds of

activists, could be spread to and understood by people who had never been to Vila Autódromo. I discuss the use of social media in communicating this sense of place across Brazil and the wider world in latter part of this chapter. This then leads into a discussion of favelas and international media coverage in the following chapter.

Liminal protest

The football tournament described in the previous chapter was just one of a series of events held in the favela known as Occupy Vila Autódromo. This campaign included an eclectic mix of attractions, from documentary screenings to clown troupes, from book launches to cultural festivals and everything in between. The purpose was twofold: to draw supporters to the favela in order to show residents that they were not alone or abandoned and to create a platform to talk about Vila Autódromo on resident's terms, temporarily removed from the pain of evictions. The campaign was sparked by an episode of violence in June 2015 which saw a clash between Municipal Guards and residents over an attempted eviction. Occupy Vila Autódromo sought, in the words of the Facebook page launched to organise the campaign, "to say together that we want a #RioWithoutRemovals, with a big #LongLiveVilaAutódromo" (I will discuss the role of social media in more detail later in this chapter).

The festive events of Occupy Vila Autódromo differ from traditional methods of protest such as marching with placards and banners. However, similar events have been used as political action in other contexts. Reclaim the Streets, a radical anti-car group active in London in the late 1990's, organised street parties and raves on roads in order to protest against the dominance of the car, for example (Carmo 2012). The festive, celebratory element of these protests has been interpreted by Carmo (2012) as an example of a protestival, a hybrid of protest and festival. St John (2008) traces the development of festive activism from the 1960's to the alterglobalisation movement of the early 21st Century, drawing on Mikhail Bakhtin's notion of the carnivalesque. Through examination of Rabelais' writings on folk festivals, Bakhtin (1968) notes that for certain short periods of time, societal norms

were inverted in a celebratory atmosphere. In these carnivalesque moments individuals experienced a unique sense of time and space, temporarily surrendering their individuality to become part of a collective whole. The temporary nature of this inversion is important, as such temporary inversions of social structures can in fact serve to strengthen those structures. In this sense, the carnivalesque festival serves a "regulatory function performed by the licensing of deviant practices", reinforcing the deviant nature of such practices (Ravenscroft and Gilchrist 2009: 35). As I will argue here however, the closely linked notion of liminality brings the *potential* to uproot and invert social structures permanently.

In his examination of Reclaim the Streets, Carmo (2012: 113 emphasis in original) quotes one of Reclaim the Streets' organisers as saying "it was easy for the street party to be seen as JUST fun, just a party with a hint of political action". Essentially, holding cultural, festive events as forms of political action, such as Reclaim the Streets' parties or the football tournaments in Vila Autódromo, risks depoliticising the issue. As Bakhtin (1968) notes, these carnivalesque inversions are temporary, with normalised social structures returning after the event, with these protestivals part of the deviant practices licensed by the carnivalesque (Ravenscroft and Gilchrist 2009). The argument I make here is that this did not occur in the case of Occupy Vila Autódromo because this episode of contention was inscribed on the space of the community, as discussed in the previous chapter. I make this point by drawing on Victor Turner's (1969; 1970; 1979) conceptual triad of liminality, communitas and anti-structure, a theory of rituals often used interchangeably with the carnivalesque (see for example Pritchard and Morgan 2006; Pielichaty 2015; Sterchele and Saint-Blancat 2015; Chapman and Light 2017). More broadly, I argue that Turner's (1969) concept of anti-structure is crucial to understanding these liminal forms of protest and that Turner's (1969; 1970; 1979) theoretical approach to these temporary inversions of norms provides a more fruitful lens for social movement theorists than that of Bakhtin (1968).

The concept of liminality comes from the work of anthropologist Victor Turner (1969; 1970; 1979), who studied rituals, noting that rites of passage involved a

segregation with social structures followed by a period of liminality: an interstructural situation. This period on the threshold, momentarily outside the constraints of social structures, is full of "potency and potentially… experiment and play. There may be play of ideas, a play of words, a play of symbols, a play of metaphors" (Turner 1979: 466). As Blackshaw (2010: 91) notes, this concept, along with the related concepts of communitas (which I will discuss shortly) and anti-structure, has been applied away from Turner's specific field of religion to explain secular ritualistic events involving a "spatial separation from the familiar and habitual". We can see elements of this spatial separation in Occupy Vila Autódromo events, in the celebration of the community, stepping outside the everyday social reality of a community living with the threat of eviction.

Anti-structure is fundamental to Turner's (1969) approach to liminality. Turner (1969) argues that liminal moments are characterised by anti-structure, wherein the structures of society can be replaced, modified or abandoned. This is not to say that social structures are always transformed through these ritualistic experiences, merely that there is the potential for transformation for those involved. Bakhtin's (1968) notion of the carnivalesque, developed from the specific case of folk festivals, always serves to reinforce social structures (see Ravenscroft and Gilchrist 2009). Conversely, anti-structure provides the potential to change those structures. For Turner (1969), the transformation of social structures could radically alter the social world in a vast range of ways (including not changing anything at all). While carnivalesque moments serve to reinforce social structures, liminal moments serve to change them, whether by reinforcing, destroying or modifying them. In this, Turner's (1969) approach to these ritualistic inversions of norms provides a more fruitful avenue for thinking about social movement organising than the Bakhtinian approach to the carnivalesque.

By examining the spatial meanings inscribed on the community, we have seen how these characteristics imbued the favela with particular political meanings. The Occupy Vila Autódromo events were a forum for communicating those meanings beyond residents of the favela. Revisiting Figure 4.1 from the introduction to the

previous chapter, we can see how football occurs in a politically charged space: with graffiti in the foreground attacking real estate developer Carlos Carvalho. Importantly, the dynamics of the favela were transformed for these events. Residents who lived day to day in fear of eviction were celebrated for their strength and resilience. Crowds came to hear them and share in the idolisation of the community. This idolisation of non-white, working class (predominantly) women also represents an inversion of Brazilian cultural norms. Idolisation is a useful term for this, as in these moments residents transcended their own specific struggle to represent the struggle against evictions across the city, evident in their desire for a #RioWithoutRemovals. In this carnivalesque moment, Vila Autódromo became the focal point of the debate around the ongoing Olympic transformations in the city, in stark contrast to the everyday "sense of abandonment" Tobias described.

In the liminal spirit, these events were inclusive, not spectacles to be observed, but festivals to be part of. Tobias' insistence that I play football is one example of this, also fitting within the general ethos of alternative football. These events are envisioned as a different organisational form of sport, in direct contradiction to the Olympic behemoth being constructed next door, where participation and camaraderie is emphasised above competition and performance (see Talbot 2016a). As is the case with protestivals (St John 2008; Carmo 2012), this inclusive spirit pervaded all Occupy Vila Autódromo events: when a clown troupe performed in the community, I was reporting on the event for RioOnWatch and asked one of the clowns where he was from. He responded in riddles, making me (unwittingly) part of the act. When a band played at a cultural festival in November, they paraded around the community surrounded by revellers, allowing others to play their instruments as they went.

Through these Occupy events then, the norms of the community were transformed. Normally, the favela "has a sense of abandonment, it has a sense of a community that already surrendered" according to Tobias, but during these events, the community was filled with vibrant energy of sometimes hundreds of people. In these moments, those who still lived there and resisted eviction were almost

revered, a clear inversion of the general disregard held for them by City Hall. These events brought crowds to the favela often supported by elements of Rio's creative class who would perform there in support of residents. In this sense, the protestival is an arena of creative transformation (Carmo 2012) wherein spaces of hope were created (see Novy and Colomb 2013), with artists from across the city contributing to the social production of space. In this liminal, in-between space alternative futures could be imagined, an alternative idea for what the community could be was celebrated.

Further, the travel to and from Vila Autódromo taking on many characteristics of pilgrimage, with supporters arranging communal travel through social media, primarily WhatsApp. This journey, as Turner (1970) notes, serves to separate the 'pilgrims' from their everyday social structures. This can be seen mostly clearly in the travel to the Cultural Festival in November, when a coach had been hired to transport supporters for the city centre to the favela. The coach picked us up, a motley crew of students and long-time activists from diverse backgrounds: Indigenous peoples and favela residents rubbed shoulders with gringos and middle-class Brazilians. With not enough seats on the coach, we squeezed up close with those we didn't know, sharing food and marijuana as we travelled together to the favela.

A key element of the liminal experience is communitas. This refers to the social relations which exist in liminal moments, described by Turner (1969: 96) as a community that is "unstructured or rudimentarily structured and relatively undifferentiated", in contrast to highly structured societies. Occupy Vila Autódromo, engenders this communitas, with the only relevant distinctions at play between residents and supporters. This is markedly more open than many social relations I encountered throughout my fieldwork: in Vila Autódromo, I was not treated as a gringo researcher, but as a supporter of the community. These differing relations are exemplified by the example of Leticia which I have previously discussed in the methodology chapter. As a reminder, after my first Comitê Popular event in November, I head to a bar nearby for a beer with several members of the

Comitê. As is tradition in Brazil, someone orders a few large bottles of ice cold beer for the table and small glasses are brought for everyone. This drinking tradition is markedly more social than the British tradition I am used to, as everyone shares from the same bottle and pours each other drinks. Leticia takes the bottle and pours out glasses of beer for everyone sat around the table except me, with my glass left standing empty. I am left to pour myself beer, feeling excluded and unwelcome, a feeling I never quite shook off with regard to the Comitê Popular. A couple of months later, in Vila Autódromo, protesting against the demolition of the residents' association, activists form a circle, holding hands and chanting slogans against evictions and the Olympic Games. I find myself caught in two minds about whether to join the circle or take photos of the on-going demolition when Leticia stretches out her hand to me and invites me into the circle.

The differing reactions towards me suggest differing structures of classification: in Vila Autódromo I am part of the group and included, whereas in the formal city of everyday relations I am excluded. While this may simply be related to time (time had passed between these events and Leticia knew more about who I was when she reached for my hand, although we weren't close), it seems likely it was also related to the differing structure of classification in Vila Autódromo. In the favela, we belong together in the temporally and spatially bounded communitas. At meetings of the Comitê, I was a gringo researcher bringing little to the table (several established Western academics were already working with and writing about the Comitê), whereas in Vila Autódromo I was another supporter of the community who could, through RioOnWatch and other media contacts, tell the world about the favela. In these different contexts, I have differing ability to act upon the principle of immediate reciprocation (see Gillan and Pickerill 2012), affecting how readily I am accepted in each context. This assertion is backed up by my experiences with the Jogos da Exclusão group, which was formed by the Comitê Popular to bring a range of civil society groups together to plan protests around the Olympic Opening Ceremony. I became part of the communication team, using my fluency in English to translate press releases: here, as I brought something to the

table, I was welcomed. This spatially and temporally limited communitas will be returned to shortly.

The final element of Turner's triumvirate, anti-structure, is of crucial import here. It is with anti-structure that Turner's work on rituals departs most clearly from Bakhtin's concept of the carnivalesque. Whereas the carnivalesque inverts norms temporarily, serving to strengthen social structures (Ravenscroft and Gilchrist 2009), Turner (1969) identifies the potential in the liminal threshold to create a moment of rupture in social structures: a moment of anti-structure. This anti-structure can be seen in the imagining of a new favela, most clearly given form in the Popular Plan which will be discussed in chapter 7. During these liminal moments, those who participated imagined a different social structure wherein favelas were celebrated for their qualities and supported, on their own terms, by the state.

Thus, the liminal periods of Occupy Vila Autódromo created moments of potential change. This occurred in a spatial context imbued with specific claims about the welcoming, friendly and secure nature of the favela. As such, these liminal festivals invoked a demand for a new social structure in which favelas are treated as viable, legitimate communities, as opposed to dangerous, poverty stricken areas to be excised from the city. In short, these liminal events are demands for residents' rights to housing and to the city to be respected (these issues will be discussed in greater detail in chapter 7). Occupy Vila Autódromo events, then, were characterised by a radical recasting of the favela as a safe and friendly community, challenging existing discourse about favelas and the power structures which uphold this discourse. Social structures were not transformed directly through these events, in part because those with the ability to change the relations between the favela and the state (such as government officials) were not in the favela for these events. Nevertheless, Occupy Vila Autódromo was important in generating a fixed sense of place from the space of Vila Autódromo, the importance of which I discuss in the remainder of the chapter.

Placemaking

Before I move into the discussion of placemaking in these liminal moments, let us first remind ourselves of some key points about place from chapter 2. While space is constantly subject to (re)construction and contestation, with different meanings inscribed upon and played out across geographical locations, place is more fixed. If space refers to the constantly changing locations we experience in everyday life, place refers to our ideas about those locations: they are less malleable, less subject to change. In that, places are often, although not always, bound up with a structure of feeling about localities (places) developed through embodied experience in those locations (spaces). Importantly, "the sense of place need not be restricted to the locality" (Agnew 1987: 28), meaning people who have never been to the favela can still understand the sense of place. In this section, I will argue that the liminal events of Occupy Vila Autódromo served to forge a strong sense of place for those who took part, bound up with anti-structure and challenging state treatment of favelas. This sense of place, as I will argue later in this chapter and in the following chapter, could then be spread across geographical scales.

Returning then to the *Espaço Ocupa* which we discussed in the previous chapter as a malleable and changing space, I will now explore the place of *Espaço Ocupa* in the favela. As a reminder from the previous chapter, this was the central site for many of the Occupy events, a flat platform providing something of a stage for performances while a tarpaulin rigged to nearby buildings protected revellers from the strong sun. Filled with vibrant energy during Occupy Vila Autódromo (see Figure 4.4) but derelict and abandoned outside these events (see Figure 4.5), this space was transformed during Occupy events. This transformed, vibrant space was "caught in the ambiguity of an actualization" (de Certeau 1984: 117) to forge a sense of place. To remind the reader of theories of place discussed in chapter 2, placemaking is a process indelibly linked to memory: as Gordillo (2004: 4) puts it "every memory is a memory of a place". In particular, this sense of place is formed

through memories of a liminal experience in the politicised space of the favela. As such, a sense of place "is a kind of imaginative experience… a way of *appropriating* portions of the earth" (Basso 1996: 143 emphasis in original). This shared conception of place helps diverse groups of activists feel connected to larger whole, which I discuss in terms of an imagined community. This sense of place then, is an appropriation of a particular understanding of Vila Autódromo based on the spatially inscribed meanings of Occupy Vila Autódromo and the liminal rupture of social structures.

Primarily, this sense of place emphasises that "this community is not dead", in the words of one resident. The place of the *Espaço Ocupa*, then, is bound up with memories of the vibrant displays of community experienced there, giving those who took part a clear sense that the favela was still strongly resisting eviction. This sense of place being forged through liminal events creates a "felt sense of quality of life" (Pred 1983: 58) bound up with anti-structure, the radical idea that the favela could co-exist with the Olympic Games and didn't need to be demolished. Thus, the sense of place generated through Occupy Vila Autódromo was bound up with contentious politics. The sense of place forged through these liminal moments was complemented and supported in other ways, such as the Popular Plan for Vila Autódromo (AMPVA 2016), which helped define the place as a legitimate, peaceful community.

This sense of place was therefore bound up with ideological critiques of top-down development, real estate speculation and, ultimately, global capitalism. The emphasis in the Popular Plan on the rights of residents to shape their own community is translated into a sense of place as residents show how they want their community to be. This includes graffiti asserting that "Vila Autódromo is ours" and "my house is made for living, not for negotiating" as well as the broader atmosphere of friendliness and security. In this, residents are articulating a critique of the Olympic city from which their voice is excluded, most clearly expressed in the graffiti displayed in Figure 5.1 which states that "the city is not what they Mayor wants… it has to be how we want it to be. It is ours". The omnipresent references in

graffiti to real estate developer Carlos Carvalho and corruption serves as a reminder of how the favela is envisaged by elites: as a drag on land value. This is contrasted with the vibrant and friendly community living on the land, starkly showing what would be lost for the material gain of a few. These issues of rights and justice which are bound up with the place of Vila Autódromo are discussed in more detail in chapter 7.

Figure 5.1: Graffiti on the back of the community church states that "the city is not what the Mayor wants, Mayors pass while the city stays, it has to be how we want it to be. It is ours. The Mayor is a public servant". April 2016.

This sense of place was relatively untouched by the constantly changing physical space of the community. When the *Espaço Ocupa* was destroyed in April to make space for new homes, it simply moved to another part of the community where the events could be hosted. The place endured even as the physical space was destroyed. The new *Espaço Ocupa* (Figure 5.2) retained the sense of place associated with Vila Autódromo, as can be seen in the following description from a RioOnWatch event report:

> Under colourful flags and lights strung from a tent at the entrance to the community's one remaining street, residents of all ages ate, danced and chatted late into the evening, as children dressed in the plaid dresses and straw hats typical of such June celebrations dashed around, laughing and chasing their friends (Southwick 2016).

Figure 5.2: The new Espaço Ocupa. June 2016.

As well as this transcendence of space, the place of Espaço Ocupa was immortalised in the Museum of Removals (see Figure 4.3). The exhibit included photographs of festivities mounted on the bricks of demolished homes, colourful paintings and a board with many handprints and the Portuguese phrase “Upgrades Now”, to which I will return to in the following section. The subtitle for the exhibit read “where the resistance, permanence and struggle are united for a single ideal”. This ideal of the favela transcends time: it relates not only to what the favela is, but also to what the favela was and what the favela could be. The valourisation of the favela as a safe, welcoming space may not be historically ‘accurate’, but it has been constructed in this way. Similarly, the ideal for what the favela could be has been laid out in the Popular Plan for Vila Autódromo, constructed through numerous meetings and deliberations. This possible future depends on the transformation of power structures in Brazil, placing value on the anti-structural rupture that Occupy Vila Autódromo generated. The ideal held up in the Museum of Removals, then, links directly to the sense of place generated through Occupy events.

The diverse groups coming together in the space of Vila Autódromo affirmed the spatial characteristics of the favela to a wider group than just that of residents. In this, the favela takes on meanings through affective bonds tied to place, based on shared experience in the temporally-bounded moments of Occupy Vila Autódromo.

The spatial meanings of the celebratory event are frozen in time as a sense of place, removed from the ever-shifting space where meanings change with the demolition of buildings. As such, the sense of place created in the liminal moment of Occupy Vila Autódromo transcends the reality of destruction and demolition which characterised the space outside these moments. In this, the political meanings as shaped by the residents, not the municipal government, are preserved in the imagination of those who participated in the events.

Benedict Anderson's (1983) seminal work on imagined community examines the way in which nations are constructed to have particular traits, allowing the populace to feel a sense of commonality and togetherness. During Occupy Vila Autódromo events, diverse groups came together in a liminal moment, when the everyday structures of classification were transformed. Outside of these events, this togetherness persisted, albeit less strongly, as an imagined community; imagined because many members "will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of communion" (Anderson 1983: 6). Applied to the nation-state, mass media plays a crucial role in shaping the discourse about what the nation is and concurrently, what ties together the imagined community (Breuilly et al. 2016). Applying the concept of imagined community to activists concerned with forced evictions in favelas shows how the sense of place created during Occupy events and shared on social media was important for fostering collaborations between different groups.

Diverse groups worked to support residents of Vila Autódromo in their fight against eviction (Sánchez, Oliveira and Monteiro 2016). During Occupy Vila Autódromo events they were referred to simply as supporters, distinct from residents but not from each other: what I have argued to be communitas. Away from these geographically and temporally bounded events however, these supporters shared a sense of togetherness, an imagined community, based on their shared sense of place, forged through Occupy events. This bond facilitated organising both in Vila Autódromo and across other issues around the city by creating a shared narrative with which activists identified. This imagined community allows support to

transcend geographical scales through social media (Gruzd, Wellman and Takhteyev 2011; Kavoura 2014), as I will discuss in the following section.

Spreading place on social media

Social media is a hot topic within social movement studies following the development of web 2.0 technologies allowing interactive communications free from mediation by traditional elites. Such technologies have become commonplace in favelas in recent years, particularly through smartphones (Nemer 2016). Some scholars have optimistically argued that this presents new opportunities for social movements which have been marginalised in media coverage by traditional media elites (Shirky 2008; Castells 2012). However, this belies the difficulty of building an audience for social movements and social media has not, generally speaking, been transformative in the ways Shirky (2008) and others predicted (Khondker 2011; Gerbaudo 2012). However, in the case of Vila Autódromo, the proximate political opportunity (see Tarrow 1996) brought by the Olympic Games stimulated global interest in the community, meaning social media's transformative potential could be realised to spread this sense of place across geographical scales. I discuss this in relation to two examples.

As mentioned above, place, unlike space, can be understood by those who have not physically visited a location. In this, generating a sense of place allowed the meanings inscribed on space during Occupy Vila Autódromo to be spread across geographical scales. I will discuss two examples of this at different geographical scales here: the Upgrades Now online video campaign (national) and RioOnWatch's live-tweeting from the favela (international). The designation of these as national and international is not absolute and is derived primarily from the different languages used in each case (Portuguese in the former, English in the latter). These, it should also be said, are simply two examples among many of the ways in which social media was used to spread this sense of place.

After months of intense pressure and a week of symbolically significant demolitions, residents and supporters had gathered for another Occupy Vila Autódromo event on 27 February. They launched an updated version the Popular Plan, a detailed proposal for developing the community alongside the Olympic park while respecting the community's needs. This event and plan are discussed in detail in chapter 7. Here, I focus on the events after this launch, when several residents recorded videos of themselves asking Rio's Mayor Eduardo Paes to stop the removals and provide upgrades[15] to the community, often drawing on the sense of place created during Occupy events. In particular, the videos responded to Paes' claim, frequently repeated to journalists (see Puff 2015; Robertson 2016b), that whoever wished to stay in the community could stay. These videos were uploaded online, primarily on Facebook, with each person challenging three others to record their own video and upload it with the hashtag Upgrades Now (#UrbanizaJá).

In the days that followed this event, these videos are ubiquitous on my Facebook feed, with many shared by the Vila Autódromo community Facebook page or other supporters of the community. Often these videos include specific points that the speaker considers important, arguing in favour of upgrading the community, such as the cost of the Popular Plan compared to removals or the legal rights of the community. Contained in these videos then, is the sense of place developed through Occupy Vila Autódromo events, which provides support for a narrative of favelas being safe, welcoming places. The videos come from a wide range of people. Initially many are people I know or recognise, having seen them at Occupy events or other protests around the city. As the days wear on, I begin to see public figures as the campaign gains important elite allies for the community, including public intellectuals such as Raquel Rolnik and David Harvey along with prominent politicians such as Jean Wyllys and Marcelo Freixo, both from the left-wing PSOL (*Partido Socialismo e Liberdade*; Socialism and Freedom Party, the support of this party will be discussed in more detail in chapter 7). Brazilian celebrities associated with leftist causes including actress Camila Pitanga and comedian Gregório Duvivier

[15] Translating literally, they were asking for urbanization, but upgrades better captures the meaning: asking for development of infrastructure in and around the favela.

also recorded videos. A household name in Brazil, Pitanga's video alone was watched over 250,000 times and shared by over 2,500 people. The participation of celebrities in the movement drew significant press coverage, with a Globo article explaining the campaign (Altino 2016), one of the few Globo articles about the community written with a sympathetic tone.

This campaign lasted for just a couple of weeks, with momentum building rapidly from the launch of the Popular Plan. This momentum largely dissipated once the Mayor announced his plan for upgrades on 8 March, despite this being markedly different from the Popular Plan. Residents wanted to keep the campaign going to ensure the Mayor kept his promises, but were unable to generate similar levels of support, although new videos would pop up occasionally. The campaign, though, was considered by activists to be a huge success, partly responsible for the announcement and subsequent (albeit partial) execution of an upgrading plan by a Mayor who had tried to destroy the favela for years. This campaign served to spread the sense of place, which itself was drawn from a space constructed as friendly, welcoming and safe, across Rio and Brazil. In essence, the #UrbanizaJá campaign spread the idea that Vila Autódromo's right to remain should be respected and the community was not an impurity to be excised.

RioOnWatch operated on a different geographical scale, beyond the borders of Brazil. Publishing about favelas in English, it was concerned with taking local stories to an international (although primarily USAmerican) audience. While there was a significant readership on RioOnWatch's Portuguese site, the English content was the key function of the site. I will discuss their role in shaping international media coverage in the following chapter, but here I will focus on their live-tweeting of events in Vila Autódromo; that is, providing short real-time updates from the favela to report events. In this example, I am live-tweeting (sending real-time snapshots of news) with other members of the RioOnWatch team from the favela as the residents' association building is demolished. While this is not an Occupy Vila Autódromo event, the sense of place forged in those events was evident in the coverage of this demolition, with those who were tweeting having attended several

of these events. I use this as an example because it was one of the most prominent examples of live-tweeting from Vila Autódromo. Being involved myself gives me the benefit of in depth knowledge, but leaves me open to suggestions that I am influencing the field. I wholeheartedly reject this criticism for several reasons, as discussed in the methodology chapter. As an ethnographer, I believe that data is gathered by becoming immersed in the field: as such, influencing the field (and indeed being influenced by the field) is inevitable. Further, my involvement was as a volunteer with RioOnWatch and was not drastically different to other volunteers who I observed on other occasions. Finally, I was following set guidelines for RioOnWatch volunteers on how to live-tweet: this guidance particularly recommended using common hashtags, posting photos and using quotes from favela residents.

When the residents' association was demolished, I was in Vila Autódromo with three others from RioOnWatch: Pernil, Dani, and Nikki. Pernil is a tanned Danish student of average height with long, flowing dark brown hair. Studying abroad for a year at one of Rio's universities, she wants to be a camerawoman, so her volunteer work with RioOnWatch tends to be filming events and creating videos. Dani studied abroad in Rio in 2014, volunteering with RioOnWatch then, and has returned to the city after graduating while she figures out what to do next. She is short and white, her skin stubbornly refusing to tan even in the Brazilian summer and while her black hair flows down beyond her shoulders, she often wears it in a bun. Nikki also studied abroad in 2014 and volunteered for RioOnWatch, where she became friends with Dani. While she is also figuring out what to do next, she is part of RioOnWatch's staff, running most of the social media, editing articles and overseeing the organisations research project into favela representations in English-language media. Short and white with brown hair, she has an infectious enthusiasm about her, particularly when she is able to get away from her laptop and spend time speaking with people like today.

We'd slept in Erika's house the night before, along with around 40 activists, in anticipation of action by the municipal government in the morning – they could

legally demolish the residents association and, following a legal decision just a few hours ago, Erika and Naiara's homes. Erika's home was a large, square concrete building with two floors and a rooftop terrace which had wonderful views over the nearby lagoon. She and Tobias had built this home over twenty years ago when they moved from Rocinha to Vila Autódromo, when Erika was pregnant with Ana and it has been their family home ever since, with Erika's mother living here as well. There is a small courtyard enclosed by eight foot high walls containing a couple of trees which bore fruits in the springtime. Opposite the house is a garage and a covered walkway which presents the only way to enter the courtyard, through a blue metal door with a sticker on the framing saying "peace in Rio". The couple had held their wedding under this covered walkway, but today it held a table for the many activists here to get a little food before the events of the day.

When we arrived, we'd bumped into Erika sweeping the floor in the hallway. Nikki asks Erika how she is, and she replies, she is "good, strong". She says, with a grin, "they can destroy my house, but they can't destroy me". In the evening, there is an emotional meeting, planning what should be done the next day. After explaining how people can help her move her belongings into the church if they come for her home, Erika expressed her gratitude to those who had come to support her and the community, telling the crowd overflowing from her lounge that "it's ok, I'm very much at peace… I'm very happy because I have so many friends, and how many people are loved like this? We just have to thank you, I am very happy for each one of you that is her with me". After speaking, she shared a long, and clearly emotional, hug with Amanda, who whispered (presumably) words of support to Erika as they embraced.

We had stayed on the fringes of the meeting; unable to fit in the room, we'd stood in the doorway listening. We had our own little meeting afterwards: in the case that demolitions occurred, Pernil would film while Dani took photographs, documenting the event so materials could be provided for journalists as well as RioOnWatch's own publications. Nikki and I would live-tweet events from RioOnWatch's dedicated live-tweeting account, using my phone's data connection. Essentially, we

would provide short, real-time updates of what was happening, including photos and quotes from residents.

We start up before the municipal guards have even arrived, sending out photographs of the candlelit vigil at dawn and banners adorning the area around the association, with translations to English. Nikki and I are functioning like a well-oiled team, particularly considering we only have one phone, with one of us going to get information to tweet while the other writes tweets, regularly swapping the phone between us. As the municipal guards arrive with officials from the municipal government at 7am, we tweet photos and descriptions of what is happening, including residents protesting that "the association is more than bricks and mortar"; that is, there is more value to the favela than simply its buildings, there are strong connections within the community and to the place itself. Municipal Guards, most of whom are brown-skinned, surround the building as white officials from the municipal government hand demolition orders to Augusto, the gruff association president in his late fifties. As the backhoe arrives and rolls and begins to demolish the building, I tweet a couple of photos before going to join a group of activists stood holding hands and shouting their protestations over the crunching sounds of steel ripping down concrete. I give my phone to Nikki, who goes to tweet quotes from nearby, where someone had set up a microphone and speakers, with Luana's cracked voice amplified across the favela, speaking of her shame that this could happen in Brazil.

A few minutes later, when I catch up with Nikki, she tells me what had been said. Amanda had been on fine form, she reports, having exclaimed that "when the buildings of Carlos Carvalho [a local real estate developer who was known to covet the land] are here, we will be here too", drawing the link between real estate speculation, capitalism and evictions. She'd been hesitant to tweet a remark made by one of the speakers. She tells me that they'd said "we will continue to fight… we will fight until the last house", but Nikki doesn't think it would be helpful to tweet that. She feels that such a statement indicates a resignation that every house will be demolished which is, in her view, a counter-productive message. The idea that

every home could be destroyed could, she worries, be interpreted as an admission of defeat, and admission that the municipal government has the right to remove the favela and transform the space. After much deliberation, she tweets the quote. Once the demolition is complete, we walk back to Erika's house, which seems to be the new de facto centre of the community. The demolition had been surprisingly difficult to watch (I had cried watching it being pulled down) but I am instantly reinvigorated when I lay eyes on Erika's house. The front of her house had previously been entirely clear of graffiti, unusual for a house in Vila Autódromo. Now, scrawled across the front of her home in big letters are the words "residents' association" (see Figure 5.3). It is not just the de facto hub of the community, it seems.

Figure 5.3: Photo tweeted from Vila Autódromo with the following caption: "Residents' Association" graffiti appeared on Erika's house immediately after the demolition #SOSvilaautodromo. February 2016

At our weekly RioOnWatch meeting the following Monday, Sarah (RioOnWatch's founder and editor-in-chief) explains that she received great feedback from journalists on this live-tweeting, which had spanned the entire week, with responsibility passed between volunteers on a rota system. Specifically, she tells volunteers that journalists are thankful for getting "a window into the community" from all over the world. That is, people around the world had gained insight into the place of Vila Autódromo and come to be (at least to an extent) part of the

imagined community of supporters. She had been able to send out concise packages of information, including Dani's photos, Pernil's video, quotes Nikki and I had collected, as well as previous RioOnWatch articles as background information, to help journalists who had never visited favelas write accurately about the demolition.

Online articles by *The Guardian* (Watts 2016) and a heavily picked up agency piece (*The Telegraph* 2016) specifically quoted tweets from the RioOnWatch live-tweeting account in reports about resistance to evictions in the favela, while other reports included quotes and materials provided by RioOnWatch (AAP 2016). RioOnWatch deliberately sought to have such an impact, aiming to become a "trusted source" for news on Rio's favelas, as one of the editors described it. Over several years, RioOnWatch built up an audience that included journalists and researchers interested in Olympic development. As one of the editors described it, the audience for RioOnWatch was "quality not quantity": the audience was small, but consisted of influential individuals who would learn from the materials posted and spread the ideas to a wider audience, a common tactic for social movements (see Escobar 2001). In the language of resource mobilisation theorists such as McCarthy and Zald (1977), RioOnWatch helped gain elite allies for several favela causes, particularly Vila Autódromo, a point I will develop further in the following chapter.

Spread to this audience through social media is a sense of the place of Vila Autódromo. Place, as discussed above, differs from space in that it is less malleable, with its basis in the imagination rather than the physical world. While notions of place are changeable, their basis in memory and imagination makes the erasure of places far more difficult than erasing the space of the favela, as the municipal government sought to do in Vila Autódromo (Talbot 2016b). Importantly, "the sense of place need not be restricted to the locality" (Agnew 1987: 28), meaning people who have never been to the favela can still understand the sense of place. In this, the sense of place of Vila Autódromo is an appropriation of the values spatially inscribed on the favela, transforming those values of rights and justice into

an imagined understanding of the location. As such, spreading this sense of place is not just spreading knowledge of Vila Autódromo; it is also spreading political ideas about the right to housing, the right to the city, and the problematic nature of Olympic development.

While the examples described above are not Occupy Vila Autódromo events, the sense of place spread through these tweets is imbued by an understanding of the place of Vila Autódromo developed in the liminal moments of Occupy events. RioOnWatch's team regularly attended Occupy Vila Autódromo events in large numbers, with many understanding the place through their experiences in these moments. As such, even while different spatial meanings related to powerlessness and marginalisation were on show in the favela, the sense of place spread on social media remained related to the spatial values imbued in Occupy Vila Autódromo events. Figure 5.2 above provides a strong example of this. The graffiti shows the determination and tenacity of residents despite the demolition of the hub of the community to immediately display defiance and community as if reflex. Inside the walls of the house, many people were crying, grieving the loss of the symbolically important building. This social media was important in generating support for the favela. The heavily shared Upgrades Now videos and the images and quotes tweeted from the favela served to bolster an imagined community of supporters that was not limited to the small geographical location of Vila Autódromo. This served to demonstrate the level of support the movement had beyond those who could attend events in the favela, giving residents and activists the sense that they were part of a larger whole, sustaining the movement. It also served to reinforce the weak ties which existed between the diverse groups involved, facilitating collaboration on a variety of issues.

It was by no means only RioOnWatch spreading this sense of place from Vila Autódromo. A video posted to YouTube documenting the football tournament discussed in the previous chapter portrays a friendly, welcoming and enjoyable place. Social media content like this serves different functions simultaneously for different audiences. Those who were there, as discussed above, watch this video

with a nostalgic recollection of their liminal experiences in the community, reinforcing their sense of place. Those who have not been to the favela see a welcoming and friendly community, directly opposed to the common stereotype of favelas. These competing understandings of favela places are at the core of evictions and housing rights protests not just in Vila Autódromo, but also across Rio, Brazil and informal communities around the world. In essence, these conflicts become contests between these different senses of place, between the dangerous, poverty-ridden slums and the friendly, welcoming communities which inhabit the same space (how this conflict played out in Vila Autódromo will be discussed in chapter 7). By asserting Vila Autódromo to be the latter, residents and activists are challenging the logic guiding the policy of displacement: that anywhere is better than a favela.

As such, spreading this sense of Vila Autódromo as a friendly and welcoming community isn't parochial and unremarkable, it has important, global implications. The particular sense of place spread from Vila Autódromo is bound up with issues of rights and social justice, with implicit critiques of housing policy, real estate development and the system of capitalism. Thus, by spreading this sense of place, activists are spreading a set of ideas designed to unsettle systems of capitalist governance and guarantee rights for the marginalised.

However, it is important to note that spreading this sense of place through social media is only possible due to the extraordinary circumstances in which the evictions in Vila Autódromo took place. While there are those who argue that the easily accessible, real time communication provided by social media has made organising collective action "ridiculously easy" (Shirky 2008: 54), the reality is more complex. The proximate opportunity for mobilisation that the Olympic Games brought for Vila Autódromo gave global attention to a small favela. Research by Catalytic Communities (2016) shows that Vila Autódromo was one of the favelas most frequently reported on in the lead up to the Olympic Games, yet it was by no means the only favela to experience evictions (see Comitê Popular 2015: 36). Indeed, it is this clear link to the Olympic project which piqued my own interest in

the favela. Those who argue that the rise of social media means an increase in influence for marginalised groups seem to ignore that marginalised groups remain marginalised online. The Olympics provided attention to Vila Autódromo, and activists used social media (as well as traditional media) to turn this attention in their favour. As such, while the example of Vila Autódromo shows that there is potential to effect changes through online activism, in many struggles this potential remains unrealised due to the lack of attention afforded to marginalised populations.

Conclusions

The space constructed during Occupy Vila Autódromo events was a liminal form of protest, temporarily transforming and inverting everyday norms of fear and pressure to joy and community. These events were separate and removed from everyday life for both residents and those who travelled to the favela for the festivities. This engendered a temporally and spatially limited communitas among those taking part, creating an inclusive atmosphere which helped define the community as safe and friendly, as opposed to the hostile stereotype of favelas. Unlike carnivalesque inversions of norms, which serve to reinforce existing social structures, liminal events are characterised by a rupture of social structures known as anti-structure, a moment wherein social structures can be reinforced but also modified, transformed or destroyed permanently. As such, these liminal events were characterised by a radical reimagining of power structures in Brazil, recasting the favela as a safe and friendly community.

Through this liminal experience, space is transformed into a sense of place, bound up with the radical potential of anti-structure and the implicit critique of power relations in Brazil. This placemaking draws on memories created in the favela during these events and is thus imbibed with the constructions of space from Occupy Vila Autódromo. This sense of place emphasises the friendly community that legitimately resides in the favela, not the destructive power of the state evident during demolitions. Importantly, this sense of place is not necessarily linked

to the physical location, most clearly seen in the moving of the *Espaço Ocupa* as the process of demolitions proceeded. This lack of scalar binding meant that activists were able to spread this sense of place to people who had never visited the favela, using social media and traditional media (the latter I discuss in the following chapter).

This use of social media was dependent on the attention brought by the Olympic Games to generate interest in the favela. A campaign of videos demanding an urbanisation plan for the community gained significant attention in Brazil, with well-known allies strongly publicising the favela's fight to remain. Internationally, RioOnWatch's live-tweeting gained the attention of numerous journalists writing about Rio and the Olympic Games. Both these forms emphasised the legitimacy and community in the place of Vila Autódromo, underpinned by a radical alternative to removals. This sense of place spread through social media is bound up with ideological critiques of top-down development, real estate speculation as housing policy and, ultimately, the global system of capitalism. In this, social media became a tool for spreading counter-hegemonic ideological messages across geographical scales.

However, this does not serve to fully endorse scholars such as Shirky (2008) and Castells (2012), optimistic about the ability of social media to change the world. Rather, it serves to show that social media has that potential, but only in specific circumstances: Vila Autódromo, almost by pure chance, found itself in the international gaze due to the adjacent Olympic developments. While the potential to spread counter-hegemonic ideas to a wide audience through social media may exist, it requires a specific set of conditions to be fully realised. Part of these conditions relate to the interest of the international press, as will be discussed in the following chapter. Through these engagements with journalists, RioOnWatch created a unique role for itself to influence coverage of Rio de Janeiro's favela communities during the Olympic Games. Chapter 6 explores this role in shaping discourse in international media accounts of Vila Autódromo before chapter 7 places Vila Autódromo's case in the wider picture of favelas and rights in Brazil.

Chapter 6: Place and the Press

Today, the 29th of July 2016, is set to be momentous day. After years of struggling, the twenty families of Vila Autódromo who agreed to a collective rehousing deal with the municipal government are due to receive the keys to their new homes today. They had been due to receive them a few days earlier, but after inspecting the buildings, residents had refused to accept the keys, arguing the work was not yet complete. They suspected that if they had accepted the keys, the additional work that was required would never be finished. A few days later, the municipal government is ready to try again, confident they had finished the work to a standard that residents can accept. I make my way out to Vila Autódromo early in the morning, with several proverbial hats on: I am planning to live-tweet the events for RioOnWatch, write an article for RioOnWatch, collaborate with a journalist for RioOnWatch, all on top of taking field notes for this ethnographic research.

In this chapter, I focus on RioOnWatch's work with international journalists and attempts to shape the discourse around favelas. In the run up to the Olympics, RioOnWatch arranged favela visits for a significant number of international journalists, and provided information to many more. Building on the discussion of place in the previous chapter, by working with traditional media sources, RioOnWatch sought to amplify the understanding of favelas as places of community and security. While journalists drew on RioOnWatch's wide network of connections and deep knowledge of favelas, they were also plied with information on the positive aspects of life in favelas. In exchange for contacts, interviews and access, journalists were exposed to an understanding of favela-places contrary to generic media coverage which focussed on sensationalised violence, drug use and poverty (Catalytic Communities 2016). The sense of the place of Vila Autódromo discussed in the previous chapter was spread to journalists in the hope that their reporting would spread the narratives associated with this understanding of place in their reporting on Rio. In doing this, RioOnWatch was explicitly attempting to transform the discourse around favelas, engaging in a discursive contest over the nature of favela-places and challenging the logic of removals.

The keys to the favela

For the first time, I make my way to the community through crowds of people. The Olympic park is abuzz with activity, seven days before the start of the Games, filled with people in brightly colour-coded uniforms: volunteers, broadcast teams and sponsor representatives, the olive-green uniforms of the army the only dull colour on show. Closer to the community, the crowds disappear and I head into the community towards the new *Espaço Ocupa*, passing the newly built homes as I do so. There are two rows of identical, whitewashed houses on either side of the newly tarmacked street, with a gap for access to the church. The new homes are surrounded by a wall, with gaps for the road at either end of the street: if they installed gates it would be a gated community.

Figure 6.1: The new homes of Vila Autódromo. July 2016.

I met Erika and exchanged pleasantries with her, but there were few other residents around, as far as I could see. She was upbeat, seemingly excited to move into her new home. Erika has been one of the most vocal resisters to eviction and is often sought after by journalists for a variety of reasons: she speaks clearly, passionately and at times poetically, making for dramatic quotes journalists can use in their stories. She is warm and accommodating, often going out of her way to

meet journalists at times that suit them and make them feel welcome in the favela. Her house was the last to be demolished without consent and when she was the victim of police brutality in June 2015, pictures of her bloodied face appeared in news reports around the world. All this makes her one of the community's most important unofficial spokespeople.

One of RioOnWatch's editors had put in me in touch with Paul, a cameraman from a major US network who is preparing a story on Vila Autódromo and I'd arranged to meet him here. I spot him, recognisable by the official IOC press accreditation pass around his neck, filming some of the remaining favela houses and introduce myself. A white guy who couldn't look more like an average American (at least to me) if he tried; slightly portly, just under six foot tall and with clean-cut hair. He first asks when the exchange of keys will be and, unsure, I ask Erika: they're waiting the legal team from the Public Defender's office before they begin she tells me. Paul and I chat briefly, about the favela and my research, as well as what he needs for his story. He has a colleague in New York who is working on this story with him and has already done much of the research, but hasn't arrived in Rio yet. He wants to interview someone from the municipal government and film the keys being handed over. I explain that I don't really know who the best people to talk to from the government are, saying I'm here to help him interviewing residents.

Paul goes back to filming parts of the favela, ensuring he has enough shots to create a good story. I speak to the tall and well-built tanned white man who has been accompanying him, who speaks good English but with a Brazilian accent. Without ever clarifying, I assume this guy, named Alex, is a translator and fixer for Paul and we discuss a little of the history of the favela. He seems to be sitting on the fence between the argument that these people need to live somewhere and that the Olympics need the space, until I explain that the community has been here since 1967 and has legal rights to the land. Shocked, Alex calls Paul back to make sure he understands that the people here should not have been forced to move, saying he now understands why residents resisted eviction so strongly.

With city officials talking to Erika and Tobias and the Public Defenders arriving, I assume things will get underway soon. There is another team of journalists here, from Australia, and Tobias approaches them asking if they need anything. When he realises the journalist doesn't speak Portuguese, Tobias tries to speak in broken English, so I head over and offer to help translate, but the journalist returns to the rest of his team. A small group of the young white female activists supporting the favela from the Comitê Popular arrive, all of whom are students of urban planning or architecture. The residents, Public Defenders, and members of the Comitê Popular head into Erika's temporary house for a meeting. I am not allowed in, as the public defender at the door keeping press out didn't know me, and none of my friends, residents or Comitê Popular activists, were close to the door to vouch for me. After a short meeting of maybe ten minutes, they emerge and head over to the new homes for an inspection.

Before the inspections begin, Amanda gathers the press around her and explains that although "we love the press", residents do not want journalists to enter the houses during the inspection process. Amanda, along with Erika, is one of the most frequently interviewed residents of the favela. A mother to four children, hers is one of the few remaining homes where children live – some others chose to leave to secure safety for their children. Standing at average height with a thin figure, her flowing curly black hair reaches down below her shoulders, she appears to be in her early forties, her light brown skin showing the beginnings of wrinkles on her face. She is particularly well-connected with social movements and the Comitê Popular, and when she speaks about the evictions she often ties the problem to larger political issues of real estate speculation and capitalist exploitation.

The houses are inspected individually and thoroughly by a small group of people including the municipal government officials and architects, the Public Defenders, the Comitê Popular members and the resident whose home it will be. The young female activists have clipboards and checklists and are assiduously assessing the quality of the homes. Journalists and other supporters are respectful of Amanda's request, occasionally filming and taking photographs through doors and windows,

but never entering the homes. The inspections are torturously long, taking up to thirty minutes per house as the journalists and many other supporters of the community wait in the street, chatting in the cool winter sun.

The Australian journalists take the opportunity to interview Erika and she is as defiant as ever, telling them "the fight goes on" because "other communities are still suffering". She believes that "we should all be equal and our rights should be respected", including the phrase "the sun is for everyone" (the Brazilian title of the novel *To Kill A Mockingbird*). I ask Paul if he wants to interview her now, but he will come back in a few days once his colleague has arrived from New York. Instead of doing an interview now, he wants to arrange another day to meet her along with his colleague, so I ask Erika if she will be available. She is hesitant and unsure, saying she will be moving things into her new home, but she agrees to meet Paul again on Sunday after I tell her he is from one of the largest networks in the US.

I chatted briefly with Tobias, catching up on how life has been here for him in the past few weeks. He seems relaxed, asking how the others at RioOnWatch are, and whether I'll write an article for the site on today's events. I tell him I will, adding that I'd like to ask him a few questions once he's inspected his house. He cuts our chat short, as Erika's mothers house is being inspected and he goes to join the inspection team. He returns afterwards saying that there are still a few little issues: the window doesn't shut properly and there is rubbish left on the floor. Tobias asks Paul if he'd like to ask any questions, wanting to ensure that the journalists get the resident's perspective. I explain to Tobias that we've already arranged with Erika to come back and interview her in a few days. Erika's mother says that she "loved" her new home, with a wide smile on her face. Shortly afterwards, when Tobias and Erika have inspected their own home, they give speeches to the small press pack that is her reporting. Tobias says that "it is a good home, but it is not the dream", a tear forming in his eye as he remembers the home that was destroyed just a few short months ago. He says that in the new home, they can continue their life and "write a new page of their story". Erika is happy that, finally, her "rights have been respected", but "the struggle still goes on". She thanks God, along with all those

who have come to Vila Autódromo over the years: activists, students and international journalists.

As we wait for the inspections to be completed, Paul and I chat about what he will cover during his time here in Rio. His hands are tied by so many rules: he's been told he can't enter any favelas at all (it could be argued that Vila Autódromo is no longer a favela at this point, it has been so transformed by the evictions). He also has to travel everywhere with Alex, who Paul explains isn't a translator or fixer, but a bodyguard. He is literally not allowed to leave his hotel alone. Alex comes over as we chat and we discuss favelas, specifically, how dangerous it is for journalists to report from favelas. I'm trying to keep the RioOnWatch line that favelas aren't all bad and that violence is exaggerated, but Alex is emphasising crime and danger. He tells me about microwaving: a slang term for when traffickers kidnap reporters and put tyres around them before setting them on fire, so that no remains are left except teeth. When I try to assert that this is unusual, Alex asks another of the Brazilian journalists and he agrees. At this point I lost hope of painting any kind of positive picture of favelas and just stopped talking about them. I felt somewhat inadequate: a white Western kid arguing against Brazilian adults about Brazil, white saviour syndrome in action. Later, when chatting with Alex, I realise he is from São Paulo and doesn't actually have any experience of working in Rio's favelas.

After the inspections are finally complete, we all return to the *Espaço Ocupa* where municipal government officials handwrite the agreement to deliver the houses in negotiation with the Public Defenders. The Public Defenders push for commitments to further urbanisation and a shorter deadline for the city to finish the final repairs. Public Defenders and the city officials eventually sign the agreement, before each resident signs in turn, receiving a key and the deeds for their home afterwards. Paul films as Erika signs the contract: he'd been waiting to get that footage before leaving. He thanks me for my help and gives me his card, in case I hear of anything interesting happening around the city during the Games, before heading back to his Copacabana hotel.

As this passage shows, members RioOnWatch's team, in this case myself, had many opportunities to influence press coverage of favelas, from ensuring journalists fully understand resident's perspectives beyond merely quoting the most dramatic thing they say to shaping the questions asked to government officials. This chapter explores this influencing of press as a deliberate strategy for effecting concrete change. To achieve this, access to information and contacts is given along with a particular understanding of favelas as places of community and innovation. In the case of Vila Autódromo, this is the same sense of the place forged in the liminal moments of Occupy Vila Autódromo (see chapter 4), shaped and spread through social media (see chapter 5). Through influencing press coverage of favelas, RioOnWatch sought to transform the common conception of favela-places as dangerous, poverty-stricken slums. In essence, this attempt to influence coverage is part of the wider contest to define the space and place of favelas which runs throughout this thesis.

RioOnWatch's story line

RioOnWatch initially set up in 2010 to provide detailed news on how Olympic developments affected favela communities from the perspective of residents, in English and Portuguese. By providing focused attention on hyper-local issues and through Catalytic Communities' (the NGO which ran RioOnWatch) pre-existing connections with favela residents, RioOnWatch quickly became a trusted source for news from favelas. Indeed, as Sarah described it to new volunteers at one meeting "trust is our biggest asset". From this trust, the organisation saw an opportunity to provide assistance to journalists reporting on favelas, providing background information, photographs, contacts, and in some cases guided trips to favelas (such as Paul's visit to Vila Autódromo). Initially, these trips were only conducted by Sarah, RioOnWatch's editor-in-chief, but as demand grew, other members of RioOnWatch's core team became involved, as did long-serving volunteers, including myself and a select few others. Wrapped up in the details of the story provided to journalists is the understanding of favelas as places of community, security and

home. In this way, this sense of place was spread to journalists and, to some extent, the readers, listeners, or viewers of their reporting.

I'd identified RioOnWatch as an organisation of interest for the research through my internet research prior to travel, and I was able to get in touch with them before I arrived in Rio, having a chat via Skype with Sarah about what I could bring to the organisation and what I wanted research with them – essentially, negotiating access. We'd agree I'd contribute several articles focussing on the history of the Olympics, serving to make the point that the problems discussed on the site haven't just popped up in Rio. She'd put me in touch with Nikki before I arrived in Rio, and I'd already started working on an article about gentrification in Olympic cities. She also added me into RioOnWatch's Facebook groups, where much of the organisation is conducted, shortly prior to my arrival in the city. On arriving in Rio, that weeks RioOnWatch meeting was my first engagement with my actual research subject (i.e. beyond general Carioca life and culture).

I'd been given an address in Santa Teresa, but I wasn't really sure how to get there, so I posted on the Facebook group asking if anyone could show me the way. Barney responded offering to meet me at the metro station in Largo do Machado, a few stops away from where I'm staying in Botafogo. We meet up – he's a young, short white USAmerican with a flash of blonde hair under a baseball cap and we spend the short metro ride to Glória discussing football, as he is a big Arsenal fan. Once out of the metro, we have a big hill to climb up to Santa Teresa. Barney mentions that the meeting is in Sarah's house as we admire the views and he explains that Santa Teresa is a little touristic in a kind of bohemian way, with artists studio's selling souvenirs. We arrive at Sarah's house early, a large, airy home with a small pool in the yard, hidden behind a high wall and gate.

While the meeting is in Sarah's house, she is not home. She's away in the US doing a university speaking tour to raise money for RioOnWatch. Instead, her second in command, a middle-aged white Brazilian woman who used to be a philosophy teacher, will run the meeting. She speaks English, but prefers to speak in

Portuguese, as this also gives the chance for volunteers to practice, she says. For this reason the meeting today, unlike all the other RioOnWatch meetings, will be conducted in Portuguese. Sarah herself is a tall, white woman with long brown hair. Born in the UK to a British father and Brazilian mother, she was raised in Washington D.C, her parents both working there as economists. Her mother's love for Brazil meant Sarah grew up reading and talking about Brazil, as well as annual visits to the country, particularly talking about inequality and economic development. Passionate about the environment, she initially studied biology at university, until on a semester in Madagascar studying Lemurs that "all the Lemurs are going to die and so are all the forests if you don't take care of the people" This prompted a shift into anthropology and eventually to a PhD in city planning, which, combined with a desire to return to Brazil, led her to study favelas in the city. Out of this doctoral research Catalytic Communities was born, initially focussed on using new internet technologies to share solutions among informal communities. She now lives in Rio with her daughter and is a strong, chatty woman who seems to have endless demands on her time as Rio gears up to host the Olympic Games.

Despite Sarah's absence at my first meeting, and with the exception that it was conducted in Portuguese not English, the meeting runs as all others I attend after it do. We sit in a circle in a large square room with green walls on the ground floor while someone (usually Nikki or Sarah) types minutes in English on a laptop that is set up to project onto the wall so we can all see. The room is airy and cool, even throughout the summer, which Sarah explains is due to the house being well-designed (there is no need for air conditioning). We go around the circle and everyone says what they have been doing for the past week – sometimes this is a short, two or three minute update, sometimes it opens wider questions that are discussed as needed. As we sit and discuss people occasionally pop out to refill their drinks in the kitchen, or swat away the mosquitos which are common in this part of the city. Otherwise, reports are greeted with intent listening by others. When it comes to my turn, I introduce myself as a researcher, explaining my research, including conducting observations of RioOnWatch, briefly to all those present and

asking them to talk to me in private if they have any further questions or don't want to be involved.

After the meeting, we headed to a bar a short walk from Sarah's home. Initially, this was only a small group – usually Barney, Nikki, myself and one or two others. Most of those present at my first meeting had been working for RioOnWatch for a month or so and they didn't go for drinks afterwards. After Christmas though, when much of that group left and a new group of volunteers started, the trips to the bar became a post-meeting tradition. The bar was something of a tourist hotspot, so I never felt self-concious speaking English there. An old building with marble tabletops and wooden chairs, decorated with wooden cabinets filled with bottles of cachaça and old photographs and newspaper clippings, we had our regular table at the back of the indoor section, and by the time the Olympics rolled around, many of us were on first name terms with the waiters. At this bar, the chat was often of home, particularly the politics of Brexit and Donald Trump, but on occasion we also talked about things that had not been said in the formal setting of Sarah's house. The bar, in this sense, was an excellent place for me to follow up on things that had been said in a more relaxed environment.

With Olympic events drawing huge press interest, many journalists were dispatched from far-flung corners of the world to Rio de Janeiro, to report on Olympic preparations. I spoke to a French-Canadian journalist who had officially taken time off from his newspaper job to spend more time in the city, choosing instead to be paid as a freelance. He got in touch with me for an interview and I agreed on the condition that I could ask him a few questions about his experience of reporting on the Olympic preparations. He explained, as we sat eating rice and beans in a bar downtown, that had he travelled on newspaper expenses, he would have spent a maximum of ten days in Rio, with much of that spent indoors writing articles. He knew that would not be sufficient to understand the complex issues associated with favelas and the Olympic Games. Hannerz (2004) calls these short-term reporters 'parachutists', travelling from one location to the next, following major stories. RioOnWatch sought to ensure these parachutists could get a deeper understanding

of the complexities of the city, particularly favelas, despite the short periods they spent in the city. As Macdonald (2008) notes, such parachute journalists have historically struggled to gain access to marginalised views, often relying on local governments or easily accessible sources including business and media elites.

RioOnWatch sought to make favela residents an easily accessible source for these journalists, always seeking to make it as easy as possible for journalists to connect to favela residents. The rise of social media has helped this, with journalists often using Twitter in particular to research stories, allowing activists to connect with them online, as Poell and Rajagopalan (2015) discuss in the case of a gang rape in Delhi. Social media has enabled numerous *favelados* to publicise their voices online (Davis 2015; Nemer 2016), allowing them to gain worldwide attention through Portuguese speaking journalists: many favela groups were included on a list of social media accounts that RioOnWatch (2016b) encouraged journalists to follow. RioOnWatch's own live-tweeting and reporting aimed to put favela voices into the spaces to which journalists were paying attention, removing the language barrier to the inclusion of favela perspectives in reporting.

Foreign correspondents were different, having a markedly different relationship with RioOnWatch. With many correspondents living in Rio, these correspondents had little need for the translation and context RioOnWatch provided to parachutists, having developed their own understandings of the city and its favelas over years on their beat. That said, my fieldwork occurred in the year leading up to the Olympics, when most foreign correspondents were already embedded in the fabric of carioca life: as Hannerz (2004) notes, such correspondents tend to require more local help in the early years of the assignment. Editors point out that there was more collaboration with foreign correspondents in RioOnWatch's early years. RioOnWatch retained contact with many foreign correspondents, providing assistance where possible, but with foreign correspondents less dependent on the NGO, there were diminished opportunities to influence their coverage of informal communities.

Collaborations with mainstream press were not limited to the face-to-face assistance I provided Paul with in Vila Autódromo. As one of RioOnWatch's editors explained to me, journalists regularly picked up themes discussed on RioOnWatch for their own reports. The team don't see this as competition, but as part of their role – their interest is in getting the information to as wide an audience as possible, not ensuring large numbers of visitors to their own website. This collaboration with journalists can be seen with the revelation that the Olympic media village was built on a slave burial ground, initially reported by RioOnWatch (see Gross 2016), but then picked up by *The Guardian*'s Latin American correspondent (see Gross and Watts 2016).

The sense of favela-places which RioOnWatch sought to spread to journalists (and by extension, their audiences) often crystallised into what appears at first glance to be an innocuous issue: how to describe favelas to an English audience. Most commonly, the Portuguese word favela is translated to the English terms slum or shanty-town. Such terms carry connotations of poverty and danger, contrary to the understanding of place promoted by RioOnWatch and residents of Vila Autódromo. Recognising this, RioOnWatch actively pressured journalists to "call them favelas". As the Catalytic Communities (2015) website points out, these terms are outright inaccurate for many favelas in Rio (and definitely for Vila Autódromo). By questioning the language used to describe these communities, RioOnWatch were able to open a discussion about the nature of favelas, framing that discussion to challenge associations with violence and poverty as inaccurate.

Most of the team at RioOnWatch privately acknowledge that to utterly ignore crime and poverty in this way is a rose-tinted view of favelas, minimizing the violence of everyday life for many *favelados* (see Goldstein 2003; Perlman 2010). However, they would counter, the stereotype of favelas as dangerous and squalid is similarly inaccurate and far more widely understood. In sum, they present a deliberately biased view in order to correct the flaws in the existing stereotype. Catalytic Communities also tracked how favelas were discussed in international media with a long-running research project (Catalytic Communities 2016) and with regular

articles highlighting the “best and worst” reports about favelas, condemning articles which reinforce the poverty and danger narrative of favelas as inaccurate. One journalist even approached RioOnWatch for help with their article specifically in an attempt to avoid being highlighted as one of the worst reports.

In this, RioOnWatch are seeking to promote what Hannerz (2004) calls a story line. Quoting Lederman, Hannerz (2004: 102) defines a story line as “a frame into which a journalist can place seemingly random events and give them coherence. It simplifies the narrative thread, reducing it to manageable dimensions by using a single overarching theme”. These story lines not only allow journalists to communicate complex foreign cultures in a relatively straightforward manner, but also arm their audiences with the tools to understand news from afar. In this, story lines function as frames for the audience, providing a “schemata of interpretation” (Goffman 1974: 21) for understanding events occurring in a faraway land. While frame analysis is a well-used approach in the study of social movements (see Snow et al 1986; chapter 2 of this thesis), I use the term story line instead to emphasise that this chapter discusses how journalists present information to their audiences, as opposed to the ways in which activists present information. Story lines are distinct from narratives in the same way; the narrative is what the audience receives, whereas the story line is what the journalist presents. Of course, this means there is often synergy between the narrative and the story line, with these story lines containing narratives which form the discourse about favelas. I talk here about RioOnWatch’s story line as the organisation sits in the grey area between journalism and activism, promoting a particular political agenda through reporting on favelas. This is the story line presented on the RioOnWatch website and presented to journalists through their interactions with members of the RioOnWatch team.

Two existing story lines collide in the favelas of pre-Olympic Rio de Janeiro: the story of favelas as hives of crime and villainy and the story of human rights abuses at sporting mega-events, particularly at mega-events outside the West (Manzenreiter 2010). These story lines stand in conflict, with favelas and their

residents portrayed as either (active) criminal or (passive) victim respectively. RioOnWatch sought to use the story line of Olympic human rights abuse, available in the city for a limited time only, to promote a new story line about favelas, to remain permanent in the city. A kind of Olympic legacy, if you will.

In essence, this RioOnWatch story line presents *favelados* as victims, but active victims. Victims of neglect by the state who have organised and fought to improve their material conditions and who have, by virtue of the same conditions by which they are neglected, an empowering potential to create new forms of sustainable urban living. That is, having been neglected by formal state structures of urban planning, favelas present an opportunity for innovation in such landscapes. The same informality and lack of regulation that makes favelas ideal hubs for drug trafficking gangs also makes creative, vibrant and sustainable communities possible. RioOnWatch, then, are seeking to promote an alternative story line to international media, one which is based in the same alternative conceptualisation of place generated in the liminal moments of Occupy Vila Autódromo. This story line stressed the strong community bonds often found in favelas, the security and safety found in many communities, and the innovate forms of sustainable living found across the city.

This story line wasn't promoted only by RioOnWatch: other activists worked to generate positive perceptions of favelas in the media. Residents of Vila Autódromo, for example, bent over backwards to help journalists, going out of their way to ensure the press got the story they needed. Always courteous, residents made a special point of thanking those who visited the community, in particular international journalists, as Erika did when she had inspected her new home. In December, at the football tournament discussed in chapter 4, I noticed myself understanding Portuguese relatively easily for the first time. In the months that followed, I consistently found it easier to understand Portuguese when residents spoke than activists in other organisation across the city: Vila Autódromo residents seemed to speak more slowly and clearly than other cariocas. This may have been a

deliberate attempt to ensure they were understood or an unconscious effect of regular contact with gringos, but it made reporting on the favela markedly easier.

Spreading the story

RioOnWatch's network of contacts and readers, editors often stressed, was powerful because of its "quality, not quantity". By this, they refer to the large numbers of journalists, activists and researchers among their readership who can use their influence to spread these ideas further. Similarly, the organization has built up a vast network of trusted contacts in favelas around the city. In seeking to influence journalistic coverage, RioOnWatch draws on what Castells (2011: 773) calls network power: "the power resulting from the standards required to coordinate social interaction in the networks". By being the arbiter of connections between international journalists and favela residents, RioOnWatch is able to shape the relations between these people: to exert power. RioOnWatch's work with journalists thereby draws on the strength of weak ties (see Granovetter 1973), but through central involvement in making the connection, the NGO is able to influence not only whom is connected to whom, but also the nature of the interpersonal relationships created. By making an understanding of favelas as places of community and security (see chapter 5) a condition of inclusion in the network, RioOnWatch is able to influence media coverage.

Through a network of contacts built up through Catalytic Communities previous decade of work in Rio's favelas, RioOnWatch has access to many of the cities favela communities. Beyond these contacts RioOnWatch built up an impressive array of expertise on issues affecting Rio's informal communities, translating (both linguistically and culturally) this expertise to its global audience. This positioned the team uniquely to support journalists, advocating for the rights of favelas like Vila Autódromo. While RioOnWatch had around fifteen volunteers based in Rio throughout is operation, only a select few of these worked with journalists in the way described above. Initially, only paid members of staff took journalists on favela

visits in this way, but as the numbers of parachutists increased in early 2016, several long-serving volunteers, including myself, began working with journalists in this way.

Through these resources, built up over years of work in Rio's informal communities, RioOnWatch is able to attract journalists to collaborate with, based on the offer of access to favelas. While it is clearly not the case that without RioOnWatch journalists are unable to report on favelas, the organisation made reporting on favelas significantly easier. Paul was by no means unusual in having been told by his employer not to visit favelas; many journalists reported this was the case, but RioOnWatch were able to persuade some of them that it was both necessary and secure to report from favelas.

Beyond this, RioOnWatch were able to provide assistance with understanding issues in favelas, making reporting on these communities easier. As one journalist who had worked with RioOnWatch reported, the organisation "offers media access to areas that would otherwise remain unseen" (quoted in Taylor 2016). Another journalist noted that it would have been "nearly impossible" to report on favelas without help, as she experienced when she tried using a taxi driver as a translator in the Vidigal favela (Savchuk 2016). In the months leading up the Olympic Games, RioOnWatch dedicated a section of their website to resources for journalists, aiming "to support informed and nuanced reporting through the Games" (RioOnWatch 2016b). What RioOnWatch refer to here as informed implicitly connotes informed about favelas as places of community, using a story line which doesn't focus on violence and poverty. This support also helped favela residents deal with press interest, as even the press teams who had translators were often poor at explaining what they were doing to residents. When Canadian TV were reporting on the favela, for example, they barely spoke to favela residents when the cameras weren't rolling, with Erika relying on Sarah's explanations to understand what was happening and when she would be interviewed.

By providing this assistance to journalists, then, RioOnWatch is mobilizing journalistic and favela contacts to promote coverage of favelas as places of community, as opposed to places of danger and poverty. This network power, Castells (2011: 773) asserts, "is exercised not by exclusion from the networks but by the imposition of the rules of inclusion". As I will show, this is not as simple as Castell's (2011) seems to suggest: the rules of inclusion are not imposed by structures, but negotiated by free agents. While the network power approach suggests that by working with RioOnWatch, Paul's reporting would have included implicit or explicit reference to favelas as places of security and community, the reality is more complex. Journalists would not have accepted RioOnWatch explicitly dictating what could or could not be included in their reporting. However, through discussions and negotiations, members of RioOnWatch were able to influence coverage through subtler means: which favelas journalists were taken to, who they were introduced to, what background information was discussed and so on.

My discussion with Alex on the dangers (or otherwise) of reporting on favelas illustrates that it is not a simple "imposition of the rules of inclusion" (Castells 2011: 773), these rules are negotiated based on the relational power and status of the actors parsing the issue. In Vila Autódromo, I am trying to persuade Paul that this favela is not vastly different from others: that while there may be issues, the strong community, affordability and sustainability of favelas holds value to *favelados*. Alex, Paul's Brazilian escort, disagrees, saying these are dangerous places and it is right that journalists are limited in their reporting on them. He brings another Brazilian reporter into the conversation to back up his point that 'microwaving' happens to journalists in favelas. Feeling outnumbered, I gave up trying to convince them of the positive aspects of favelas. In this context, the power I draw from intellectual capital (see Bourdieu 1984; chapter 2 of this thesis) as an expert on favelas is limited by Alex's cultural capital as a native Brazilian, with whom I am unable and unwilling to sufficiently argue (see epilogue).

This is a symbolic struggle, in Bourdieu's (1989) terms, over the nature of favelas. In this discussion of favelas, power relations serve to ensure Alex's understanding of

favelas appears to be correct. When I later learned that Alex is from São Paulo and has little expertise on Rio's favelas I became bolder in arguing my case against him; the importance of his Brazilian nationality is diminished in relation to my own experience and knowledge of Rio. As such, when we later discuss specific favelas, I am able to succeed in convincing Alex and Paul that certain communities are not as dangerous as they are often perceived to be based on my intimate knowledge of Rio. Alex and I are exercising our power relations in a "symbolic struggle for the production of common sense" (Bourdieu 1989: 21). As such, this is not a network imposing rules of inclusion as Castells (2011) suggests, rather the rules of inclusion are a product of power relations between social actors.

Comparing this discussion with Alex to a discussion I had with European journalists on the dangers of reporting from favelas reinforces this point. At the end of March, I spent a day with a all-white Eastern European television crew, showing them around Vila Autódromo and helping them interview residents. Before we enter the community to talk to residents, I give a brief of the history of the favela, to help them understand the context. They ask questions about the safety and levels of crime in the community and I respond that Vila Autódromo is perfectly safe, as are many other favelas. The cameraman is nervous about visiting favelas, thinking about his two children back home. Their translator, a woman who lives in Rio, is also sceptical about the safety of reporting on favelas and we briefly discuss this point. I argue that as long as you go with someone who lives there who can vouch for you, favelas are safe places, which she concedes.

Here, with the European television crew, I felt confident in pushing the point that favelas are safe for journalists; I was able, in Castells' (2011: 773) terms, to impose "the rules of inclusion". Conversely, Alex was able to draw not only on his national identity, but on others with experience, to back up his argument that favelas are dangerous. To provide another example, when a North American television crew visited the favela escorted by Sarah in February, she took every opportunity to provide background to the evictions in the favela, drawing on her own experience. She would frequently preface these statements about what life used to be like by

saying something along the lines of 'when I first visited here several years ago', emphasising her long-term knowledge about the community and its struggle. The point here is that this is a process of negotiation, not imposition, based on the capitals and power relations between the individuals involved. Writing articles sympathetic to favelas being a condition of collaboration could never have worked: good journalists would not accept imposed conditions on what they were able to write. However, through processes of negotiation like those outlined above, RioOnWatch had an opportunity to influence coverage of favelas in the years preceding the Games.

This contingent process of influencing coverage is not only pursued through these conversations between RioOnWatch and journalists, but also in the structure and planning of favela visits by RioOnWatch. Which favelas journalists visited with RioOnWatch also influenced coverage: Vila Autódromo was a safe community, people did enjoy living there and residents did have legal rights to their land. The same cannot be said for other favelas where violence is an everpresent danger, or poverty is rife. In short, Vila Autódromo was a perfect myth buster for RioOnWatch: journalists visiting the community could be convinced that slum was an inaccurate term for favelas, for example, far more easily when visiting Vila Autódromo than compared with other favelas.

Terms like slum and shanty town connote inadequate and overcrowded housing, poor access to services such as sanitation and electricity, squalor and illegality. In Vila Autódromo, these descriptions are easily refutable: the houses are large and well built, served by electricity and running water, and residents have legal title to their land, as will be discussed in chapter 7. The only squalor in the favela is a result of removals, with debris from demolished homes scattered throughout the community. Residents even had an internationally award-winning plan for continued upgrading of the urban space, evidencing the flexibility and possibility of favela communities. As such, in Vila Autódromo, RioOnWatch were able to present their view of favelas as reality, not perspective. This is crucial in the symbolic struggle over the power to define favelas. The efficacy of this power "depends on

the degree to which the vision proposed is founded in reality" (Bourdieu 1989: 23). Even if the most knowledgeable, well-renowned expert on favelas were to persuade a journalist that favelas are safe, if the journalist was then shot during a visit to a favela, that understanding of favelas would be unlikely to hold sway. Here, the space (see chapter 4) and place (see chapter 5) of Vila Autódromo are crucial in ensuring that these symbolic struggles are effective.

Of course, above all of these characteristics which made Vila Autódromo a useful case for RioOnWatch (and others) to present an alternative story line for favelas was its location. Directly next to the main Olympic park, Vila Autódromo was the only favela the municipal government admitted was being removed because of mega-events. Data compiled by the Comitê Popular (2015: 36) disputes this, suggesting that if removals for Olympic and World Cup legacy projects are included, mega-events motivated evictions in over thirty favelas across the city, affecting over 4,000 families. Nevertheless, the motivating factor in Vila Autódromo was undeniable. For journalists looking to tell a story in the existing 'human rights abuses in preparations for mega-events' story line, Vila Autódromo was a perfect fit. In this, the favela represents a unique political opportunity for social movements to challenge existing story lines about favelas.

For RioOnWatch and other social movements, Vila Autódromo also represented an important precedent. Given the community's strong legal rights, lack of drug trafficking or militia gangs, well organised resistance to eviction and international visibility, removing the favela was a political challenge. As one of RioOnWatch's editors explained at one of the regular team meetings, Vila Autódromo is important because if they can remove them, they can remove any favela. From this importance stems the widely-held belief that by fighting evictions in Vila Autódromo, activists were fighting against evictions in other parts of the city, not to mention the wider country and indeed world.

As such, by using network power to influence coverage of Vila Autódromo's resistance to eviction, RioOnWatch was implicitly challenging wider

conceptualisations of informal communities as dirty, dangerous places. Castells' (2011) concept of network power provides a useful lens to understand why RioOnWatch were able to influence journalistic coverage of favelas, translating their experience and knowledge into leverage over parachutists unfamiliar with the city. However, Castells (2011) gives to little attention to the social practices involved in the execution of network power. The negotiations involved in leveraging RioOnWatch's power into sympathetic press coverage are more complex than he suggests. These individual negotiations with journalists formed part of a wider strategy to transform reporting on favelas during the Rio 2016 Olympic Games by changing the discourse surrounding such communities.

Changing the story Line

As I have argued elsewhere, this application of network power served as a discourse intervention for Rio's favelas (Talbot 2018). Through this negotiated network power, RioOnWatch sought to change the way favelas are thought and spoken about, particularly targeting international media accounts of favelas. They saw the attention brought to the city by the 2016 Olympic Games as an "unprecedented opportunity to straighten out the narrative on these neighbourhoods once and for all" (RioOnWatch 2016b). RioOnWatch used the privileged position they had carved out for themselves as English-speaking experts on favelas to influence press coverage of these communities in the media spotlight that the Olympics brought to Rio de Janeiro. This discourse intervention, as Karlberg (2005) would describe it, was deliberately intended to effect a change in policy towards favelas, targeting the justification for removals and heavy policing.

Discourse intervention, as Karlberg (2005: 1) explains, is "an effort to change our social reality by altering the discourses that help constitute it". Discourse, to remind the reader, refers to "a group of statements which provide the language for talking about – a way of representing the knowledge about – a particular topic at a particular historical moment" (Hall 1992: 291). This draws on the notion that how people talk about a particular phenomenon affects how they think and act in

relation to it. In essence, power relations influence society by generating a regime of truth: "that is, the type of discourse it accepts and makes function as true" (Foucault 1980: 131). This discourse then acts to transform or reinforce power relations, fulfilling the inescapable link between power/knowledge (Foucault 1977). In attempting to change this discourse, RioOnWatch are part of a wider framing contest about favelas, intending to change the nature of decisions made about favelas by challenging what "nondecisions" (see Bachrach and Baratz 1962) are in relation to these communities.

To put some empirical meat on these theoretical bones, if favelas can only be thought about as slums, ghettos, and havens of crime and poverty, the preferred action towards favelas will logically be to remove these blights on our cities. Within this regime of truth, *favelados* are thought of as uneducated criminals and their power to make claims about favelas is limited. RioOnWatch's work with journalists, then, was an attempt to promote an alternative discourse about favela communities, whereby these communities are celebrated for their contributions to the city, transforming how favelas and their residents are treated as a result.

The question inevitably arises, with their approach to changing how favelas are treated, of why RioOnWatch focused much of its attention on international media, as opposed to local, Brazilian press. While it would be inaccurate to suggest RioOnWatch didn't try to influence coverage by the national media, it lacked the privileged position it held in relation to the international media. The focus on favelas from the perspective of those who live there was in direct contradiction to mainstream Brazilian media: as one of the editors described it, part of RioOnWatch's role was "showing that [Globo] was saying something different from Vila Autódromo" residents. The marginalization of favela perspectives in mainstream Brazilian media is not new (Rosas-Moreno and Straubhaar 2015) and by focusing on favelas, RioOnWatch was exploiting a niche in mainstream coverage. However, this focus on favelas was not unique to RioOnWatch: it was one of many small organisations writing about developments in favelas, meaning the Portuguese language output entered into a competitive marketplace. The English language

reporting landscape on favelas, conversely, was irregular and often ill-informed, written in some cases by journalists who have never visited the community which they discussed, giving RioOnWatch a fairly dominant position.

RioOnWatch hoped, perhaps somewhat naïvely, that influencing the discourse on favelas internationally would in turn influence the national media discourse about favelas. More pertinently, they perceived Eduardo Paes, Rio's Mayor, to have ambitions on the world stage, as a potential future president of Brazil. Coupling Paes' presidential ambition with Brazil's long-standing foreign policy objective of securing a permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council (Resende 2010; Clift and Andrews 2012), activists sought to portray Paes as a serial abuser of human rights. Such a reputation would undermine Brazil's claim to speak for the Global South, the oppressed peoples of the world, thereby harming Paes' presidential ambitions. The goal for activists, then, was to criticise Paes directly and threaten his future ambitions by exerting pressure on him to change municipal government policies towards favelas.

In the months prior to the Olympic event, this discourse intervention crystallised into a specific strand of RioOnWatch's work. The NGO attempted to create an online campaign with the title #StopFavelaStigma to explicitly challenge stigmatised representations of favelas during the Olympic Games. The hashtag was specifically chosen to be understandable to both English and Portuguese speakers. On August 3, RioOnWatch's social media accounts posted various stigma-busting articles and videos as well as commissioned articles from favela journalists. Several favela activists had been involved in the planning of the campaign and posted photos or descriptions tackling the issue of favela stigma. The intention was to create a moment in which favela resident's voices could be heard, which could then be collated, translated and handed to journalists who arrived to cover the Olympic city.

More generally, this discourse intervention can be seen in RioOnWatch's specific push to get journalists to "call them favelas" (Catalytic Communities 2015). This

focus proved an effective opening gambit, drawing in the various issues related to the misrepresentation of Rio's favelas from a single issue. RioOnWatch editors lobbied foreign correspondents to avoid using terms such as slum and shanty town. Sarah tells a story of discussing the issue with a New York Times correspondent in Brazil. In the days that followed, he asked his Twitter followers how best to translate the word favela. In his next report on the issue, he avoided using terms like slum or shanty town, instead physically describing favelas as if no name existed, writing of a vast maze of cinder block homes, for example. Others were less receptive. The Associated Press, for example, argued they needed to use language which could be easily understood by all and as such favela was not an acceptable term, according to a RioOnWatch editor. In my own work publishing about Vila Autódromo for small media outlets, editors have attempted to change the word favela for slum or shanty town, but backed down on my insistence that the term is inaccurate for this favela. These terms matter: they signify wider understandings of favelas as places of either poverty and criminality or culture and innovation. RioOnWatch, in short, was engaged in a symbolic struggle to define favelas.

RioOnWatch conducted their own research project into the representations of favelas in international media between 2008 and 2016 with content analysis of over 1,000 articles mentioning the word "favela". They found some evidence that this discourse intervention was successful: there was a small increase in articles calling favelas by the Portuguese term from 2009, concurrent with a decrease in negative alternatives like slum or shanty town and an increase in neutral alternatives like community or neighbourhood (Catalytic Communities 2016: 35). The report also looked into how favelas were portrayed throughout the article, not just in the translation of the term. Over the period, favelas were predominantly depicted as sites of violence and drug/gang activity, with over 350 articles portray them in this way. By contrast, favelas were depicted as sources of culture in around 130 articles and as places with a sense of community in around 90 articles (Catalytic Communities 2016: 47). More encouragingly, from RioOnWatch's perspective, favela residents were portrayed as active agents of change in over 150 articles, the

second most common characteristic of residents in press coverage, behind financially poor (just under 250 articles).

Digging deeper into this data suggests a distinction between the articles produced by foreign correspondents and those produced by journalists who have flown in briefly to report on the mega-events. While the year-by-year data shows a slow decline in portrayals of favelas as sites of violence and gang activity increased, there is a noticeable increase in articles depicting favelas in this way in 2014 and 2016, coinciding with the FIFA World Cup and Olympic Games. This shift in depiction occurs alongside a huge increase in the volume of journalism in those mega-event years, with just under half of the articles covered in the eight-year project published in those two years. This points to a significant divide between foreign correspondents with an ingrained understanding of the city built through years of living in Rio de Janeiro and those journalists who flew in to cover the context of these mega-events. Parachute journalists who flew in to produce reports on the city often used unreliable sources of information uncritically, leading to inaccurate reporting. One report by USA Today stated that forty percent of Rio's favela residents use crack based on an interview with a church minister, for example, whereas publicly available statistical data shows this is an absurd exaggeration (see RioOnWatch 2016c). In contrast, foreign correspondents drew on a trusted network of contacts and informants established over several years (of which RioOnWatch itself was a part, in some cases) and held a greater appreciation of the context of events gleaned from living in the city.

This distinction between the foreign correspondents and parachutists like Paul is telling. RioOnWatch worked with foreign correspondents at times, with the change in New York Times coverage mentioned above just one example among many. Indeed, foreign correspondents like Will Carless (quoted in Savchuk 2016) were well aware that "CatComm has a certain worldview and agenda", drawing on the group as a useful resource but avoiding being spoon-fed information about favelas. Indeed, many foreign correspondents actively avoided working with RioOnWatch due to reservations about promoting their deliberately biases stance on favelas.

However, the majority of RioOnWatch's work with journalists (at least during my fieldwork) was with parachutists asking for help understanding and accessing favelas. These journalists arrived in Rio often with few contacts, little local knowledge and no more than a Portuguese phrasebook. As such, they needed the help which RioOnWatch could provide: hence RioOnWatch was able to access these journalists far more easily, influencing the coverage of favelas through the process of negotiation described above.

In the months leading up to the Games, RioOnWatch helped a steady stream of journalists report on the Olympic city, attempting to subtly influence their coverage. As Hannerz (2004: 154) notes "the critical importance of local helpers in foreign news work tends not to be acknowledged", meaning RioOnWatch's contribution to discourses surrounding favelas in the international media remains in the background. While RioOnWatch's own report highlights a variety of shifts in the discourse, hailed as "a truly positive legacy of the 2014 World Cup and 2016 Olympics" (Catalytic Communities 2016: 63), the picture remains complex. 'Slum' remains the most common translation of 'favela' (although use of the word favela increased over time), violence or drugs remain the most common topics and a plurality of articles still give an overwhelmingly negative impression of favelas (Catalytic Communities 2016). On some measures, such as the translation of the word favela, the 2016 percentage most closely resembles the data from 2008, having recovered from an initial jump in negative alternative translations after Rio won the right to host the Olympics. That said, there was vastly more coverage.

All this leaves a complicated picture for the future. While RioOnWatch was able to shift discourses in the international media slightly through the application of network power, there is no clear evidence of these changes influencing policy shifts. In the weeks leading up to the Olympic Games Brazilian media outlets *O Globo* (Briso 2016) and *Veja* (Ritto et al 2016) produced reports on police violence that were uncharacteristically sympathetic to favela residents, perhaps suggesting the international coverage was influencing national discourse. There is no evidence of a broader shift in national media discourse, however: Brazilian media still

appears to routinely marginalise favelas (Rosas-Moreno and Straubhaar 2015; van Dijk 2017). Even the gains made through working with foreign correspondents may be lost, as bureaus move away from Rio to São Paulo or Brasilia after the Games. Hannerz (2004) notes that most foreign correspondents with major outlets routinely move to new locations every three to five years. In the case of Rio, this seems to be timed with the schedule of mega-events, as long-serving correspondents are reassigned elsewhere after the Games, with new personnel arriving with little experience of the city. While RioOnWatch will continue to promote the idea that favelas can be sites of creativity and innovation in the coming years, the potential for impact is lessened; the political opportunity is over.

Competing places, competing story lines

Story lines evolve over time. They are, above all, schemata for framing information, a useful tool to help an audience understand a distant land, allowing the journalist to convey information about events without needing to explain every aspect of the context. The Olympic Games, as has been well detailed in the Olympic studies literature, provide an opportunity to write new story lines, not just about sporting achievements, but for the host city and/or country (Arning 2013). Indeed, this opportunity to present the local on the global stage can be a powerful factor for ambitious politicians hoping to host the Games. In this sense, the Olympic Games represent a clear moment of possibility for new, emerging storylines about Rio de Janeiro and Brazil.

This is particularly so in the case of Rio 2016. Latin America is chronically underreported on by journalists. As Hannerz (2004) notes, after the era of internationally news-worthy stories about communist, guerrilla uprisings and military coups and dictatorships in the second half of the 20th Century, many mainstream news organisations attempted to save money on coverage of the region. Instead of permanent correspondents, someone from the Washington office would visit occasionally. Brazil is particular in this case, with a unique language which not all correspondents even spoke fluently. The Olympic Games

changed this, to an extent. Several news organisations invested in covering the build-up to Latin America's second Olympics. Many existing correspondents moved their bases to Rio from cities across continent, now gaining the deep insight and understanding that can only be derived from living day-to-day in a city. These existing correspondents were bolstered by new arrivals, including a number of freelancers looking to get the inside scoop on the Olympic city.

That is not to say coverage became perfect. Many of these Rio-based correspondents had sole responsibility for covering not just the world's fifth largest country, but the entire continent of over six hundred million people. This meant that for significant periods, they were not in Rio de Janeiro but travelling across the continent on their beat. I met journalists on numerous occasions reporting on Vila Autódromo who were the foreign correspondents with responsibility for Rio, but were based in the in other parts of Latin America or even in the United States. However, as one of the RioOnWatch editors explained, having Rio as a base not just for themselves, but for their families and social circle, vastly improved (from RioOnWatch's point of view) the quality of coverage from the majority of the foreign press corps, tackling not just favelas, but issues of race and corruption in detailed and nuanced ways.

The Olympic moment, then, provided Rio de Janeiro with a moment in the global spotlight to reshape its image on the world stage. Brightly coloured Olympic banners appeared across the city in the weeks before the Games, hailing the arrival of "a new world", Rio 2016's official slogan. But as one resident of Vila Autódromo put it, quoted in a Washington Post article (Phillips 2016), the "new world has no room for the poor". In this sense, the new world ushered in by Rio 2016 looks remarkably similar to real estate developer Carlos Carvalho's vision for Barra da Tijuca: "a city of the elite… [with] noble housing, not housing for the poor" (Watts 2015). The new world, the municipal government's vision for Rio's future, has no favelas.

As detailed in Catalytic Communities (2016) report on the representation of favelas in the international media, Rio's informal communities remain stigmatised in media coverage. This perhaps explains the local government's desire to hide favelas from view, to avoid negative press coverage. Harris' (2016a) excellent mini-documentary for US website Vox, supported by RioOnWatch, explores this policy, noting the wall along the highway which ensures "that people who leave the airport to the South Zone don't catch a glimpse of the reality of this city". After visiting Vila Autódromo, Harris perceptively concludes that the new houses were being built to hide the favela; "lest, heaven forbid, the international community catch a glimpse of the real Rio". A strikingly similar conclusion had been published on RioOnWatch's website a few months earlier (see Talbot 2016b). The second part of Harris' (2016b) mini-documentary provides a comprehensive overview of the insurgent story line on favelas which RioOnWatch promotes. Visiting several favelas, he documents the creativity and innovation which spring from informality, while perceptively observing that the same unregulated environment is what allows some favelas to fall into the grip of trafficking gangs. This alternative story line celebrates favelas as places of community and sources of culture: the place we see described in Vila Autódromo's Popular Plan (AMPVA 2016) and drawn from Occupy Vila Autódromo events. In this, by promoting this insurgent story line, RioOnWatch is building on the sense of place developed through the events held in the favela, transmitting this sense of place across geographical scales to the other side of the world.

Paul's report included references to this sense of place, with Vila Autódromo described as a "calm, working class community", with residents noting that "we miss our community, it was beautiful", directly contradicting the common view of favelas as dirty slums. Having established that Vila Autódromo was a pleasant community for residents, the report compared what had been built to replace the community, with one resident bemoaning that "a parking lot has more value than my house". The salience of this point relies on RioOnWatch's alternative story line about favelas, on the audience's understanding that the house was valuable due to its location in a "beautiful community", as opposed to a poverty-stricken slum. The report closes by reminding viewers of the attachment residents have for the place:

“if I would have left this community, I would have lost all sense of my life, because I am happy here”.

Conclusions

The sense of place generated in the liminal moments of Occupy Vila Autódromo held a radical potential for changing the way we think and talk about favelas. Confined to the few hundred people who attended these events, however, this sense of place served little purpose. The value of this commonly held understanding of the place of Vila Autódromo is in its ability to convey a radical critique of top-down development and ultimately, capitalist accumulation, through talking about a location. This provided an effective counter to the authority of the state to define favelas and the associated discourse. By welcoming press to the favela, this sense of place could be spread across geographical scales, even as journalists portrayed both sides of the argument. Residents embraced journalists, going out of their way to help them understand the community, as Tobias approaching the Australian journalists shows. Journalists, particularly international journalists, were always thanked for visiting the community in the knowledge that international exposure would help pressure Rio’s government into treating Vila Autódromo with greater respect. Brazilian media were also welcomed, but covered the story far less, in part due to the biases which exist within the national press (Rosas-Moreno and Straubhaar 2015; van Dijk 2017).

With the influx of international press, RioOnWatch served as a middle man between journalists and favela residents. In doing so, the NGO sought to promote an alternative way of understanding favelas, as places of innovation and community instead of sites of violence and poverty. While this approach can be accused of minimizing the everyday violence of favela life, RioOnWatch saw it as a counterweight to an overwhelmingly stigmatising public discourse around favelas. Through publishing on the RioOnWatch website as well as collaborations with visiting journalists, RioOnWatch promoted this different understanding of favelas to an international audience. Many others worked to present favelas in similar ways,

including residents of Vila Autódromo, the Comitê Popular and other activist groups: I have focussed here on RioOnWatch as I was intimately involved in this process during fieldwork.

Through collaboration with journalists on stories, RioOnWatch sought to influence international coverage of favelas. Journalists would come to RioOnWatch for assistance in reporting on Rio's informal communities, which can be a complex and intimidating task. Through explaining aspects of favela life, providing background information and introducing journalists to favela residents, RioOnWatch promoted an alternative story line with which journalists could understand favelas. In this, RioOnWatch was exercising a form of network power, as journalists reaped the benefit of the network of contacts and expertise to which RioOnWatch gave them access. The NGO had the opportunity, in Castells' (2011) terms, to impose the rules of inclusion in order to ensure sympathetic coverage for favelas and their residents. As I have explained, this approach to network power is too simplistic: sympathetic coverage was gained through complex negotiations between individuals, not a simplistic imposition of rules. However, RioOnWatch had the opportunity to influence coverage through this close interaction with the international press.

This amounted to a wider attempt to use Rio's moment in the international spotlight to transform the discourse surrounding favela communities. This discourse intervention approach coalesced around a specific attempt to change the language used to describe favelas: to "call them favelas". This was a useful opening point in the negotiations involved in the negotiated application of network power. By discussing the different connotations of terms like slum and shanty town, RioOnWatch sought to impress the inaccuracy of these terms on journalists, pushing for terminology with more positive connotations. Favelas like Vila Autódromo, where such connotations were clearly inaccurate, made it easier to persuade journalists to approach favelas from RioOnWatch's perspective.

Through a research project, RioOnWatch tracked coverage of favelas in the international media in the years leading up to Rio 2016, finding some evidence of a

changing discourse surrounding these communities. However, this changing story line remains contested and contingent, particularly as Rio moves out of the global spotlight and many of the foreign correspondents who were based in the city are assigned elsewhere. Clearly, reporting on Vila Autódromo was infused with the sense of place forged in the liminal moments of Occupy events, but it remains unclear whether this insurgent story line will continue to emerge and secure a lasting transformation in the discourse surrounding favelas.

Chapter 7: Rights, Sovereignty and Contesting Place

As the Olympic Games began, then, twenty families from Vila Autódromo were sitting in their new homes. This conclusion to the struggle was by no means certain and at times seemed unthinkable. At the end of February, the contest over evictions in Vila Autódromo's resistance reached a crescendo. After a judge ordered the Residents' Association building could be destroyed, activists flocked to the community to support residents. Over the following week, many activists slept in the favela to be ready for demolitions early in the morning. The Residents' Association was demolished on Wednesday, as was Naiara's home along with her Candomblé spiritual centre. On Saturday, residents hosted another Occupy Vila Autódromo event. The event had been planned for months, but happened to coincide with what was, in hindsight, one of the busiest weeks of the entire campaign of resistance. A video had been produced and shared on social media with various residents inviting people to the event, and invitations had been sent to Mayor Eduardo Paes, State Governor Luiz Pezão, and Brazil's President Dilma Rousseff. There were two events scheduled: in the morning lots would be marked out for new buildings and a clown troupe would provide entertainment and in the afternoon the updated version of the Popular Plan would be launched.

The plan was a clear invocation of the sense of place discussed previously. In this, the Popular Plan served as a manifesto for this understanding of favelas as places of community and security. This chapter examines how this understanding of place clashed with municipal government policies derived from an alternative understanding of favelas. In this, I examine the nature of rights in Brazil using Holston's (2008) concept of insurgent citizenship to frame the way rights are understood and applied in the Brazilian case. This examination of Brazilian rights necessarily draws in the question of sovereignty, of who has the right to decide. In this case, it is the sovereign who has the right to decide on which understanding of place shapes the future of Vila Autódromo. While examining the nuances of the agreement by which twenty families stayed in the community reveals implicit

acceptance that residents should have a voice in shaping their community, the agreement itself is a clear repudiation of residents' right to define their own space and place. The favela is no more (in a material sense at least): the space has been transformed into a condominium, removing the impurities of the favela and driving up land values.

Presenting a plan for the future

It was a baking hot day, the temperature close to fifty degrees Celsius. I headed out to Vila Autódromo for the morning session on my own, spending around an hour on a crowded bus without air conditioning. The place is already busy when I arrive, a hive of activity. There are around a hundred people spread across the favela in small groups. I headed over to the church, where I can see a small group marking out lots supervised by Augusto. A leader by virtue of his experience of evictions, he came to Vila Autodromo after being evicted from Cidade de Deus in the 1990's, where he lived after being evicted from his home at the edge of the Rodrigo de Freitas lagoon in the South Zone when he was a child. Those evictions ignited his political awareness and he was instrumental in securing several legal protections for the favela, which will be discussed shortly. He appears a little rough around the edges, with short greying hair atop his roughly shaven face. With light brown skin, he stands at around six foot tall with a small pot belly and he commands the respect of residents and activists alike.

A builder by trade, he is giving instructions to the group of youths around him. They appear to be students, and are working from A3 printouts of the plan for the community (Figure 7.1). A clown troupe is moving around the favela, entertaining the students and generating a friendly, relaxed atmosphere. I recognise about half of the people here, excluding the clowns. I chat briefly with a few people I recognise before heading towards Erika's house, the de facto hub of the community since the demolition of the residents' association. Children are gathered outside the building, a group of them being supervised by a couple of adults. They are drawing

a "*planinho popular*" (little Popular Plan), including things they want to have in Vila Autódromo (Figure 7.2).

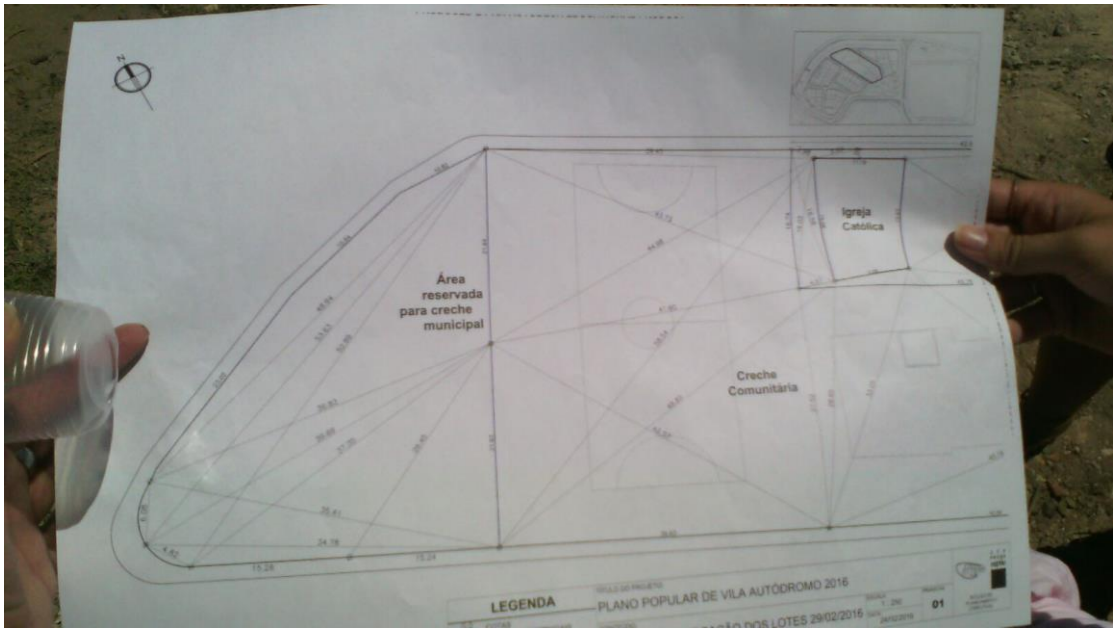

Figure 7.1: The plans for the community, including a community crèche. February 2016.

Figure 7.2: The children's Popular Plan. Includes "no pollution" and "I want it to stay like this". February 2016.

After a little while, people stop marking out the lots to have a lunch break. Food seems to appear out of nowhere (although I think it actually appears out of someone's house). Some sheets had been rigged up to provide some respite from the unrelenting sun, with a few tables set up underneath them. People spill out from the tables onto the floor, sprawled around the limited shade in the *Espaço*

Ocupa. A steady trickle of visitors is continuing to flow into the favela and join the growing crowd. People are chatting in small groups, catching up on what has happened in the community this week. A few of RioOnWatch's team arrives as lunch wraps up. We catch up briefly before everyone else seems to head off towards Erika's house, though we must have missed the signal. We meet Erika in the courtyard and I ask where they will do the launch and she replies "here!", gesturing around the shaded courtyard in front of her three story home, as if the answer was obvious. There are photos of the plan up on the walls, as well as photos from the events in June last year when there was a violent altercation with the municipal guards. More people have arrived, there may be close to two hundred people here now: I don't think I've ever seen this many people here. We find a space on the roof of Erika's garage; it is obvious from up here that not everyone will fit in the courtyard. It's already full and there are so many people still outside.

People start leaving the courtyard as another group of RioOnWatch's team arrives. It seems the event is being moved to the children play area: the only unoccupied public space left in the community with enough shade to shelter the numbers from the baking sun. Speakers are set up in park, and a crowd gathers, with cameras filming at the front. Augusto stands in front of the crowd, next to the slide. Holding a microphone, he calls out for Erika, but she is nowhere to be seen. Tobias is walking around filming on a digital camera, describing what was happening as a voiceover to his video, apparently so he can post the video on Facebook later. All of a sudden, applause starts from the back of the crowd, slowly rippling forward until Erika emerged at the front, in a neat checked shirt and denim shorts, ready to address the waiting mass of bodies.

She starts by saying that this week "the association fell, but we didn't", to a huge cheer. She speaks about how they will continue resisting eviction, even saying at one point "long live the Olympics" stating her desire to coexist with the Games. Amanda takes the microphone next, attacking Eduardo Paes; "he promises that whoever wants to stay can stay, but that's not how the municipal government acts on the ground". The crowd breaks into chanting "the Vila will stay": the chant was

started by Erika, who seems to be enjoying herself, a mischievous grin on her face as the chanting interrupts Amanda. After a couple more speakers, including a representative of the public defenders office pledging their support, Carlos Vainer, professor of urban planning at UFRJ (Federal University of Rio de Janeiro) and co-ordinator of the Popular Plan, takes the microphone.

He says that the Popular Plan rejects removals and that adequate housing is not merely a house, but integration with the city. He continues by attacking the hotel, gesturing to the Olympic construction rising behind him, doesn't want the view of Vila Autódromo, hence the community is being removed. He explained that Vila Autódromo's resistance was an example not just to others in Brazil, but across the world, thanking the residents for "the class they were giving" in resistance. Vainer offers an anecdote to elucidate how global the story has become, saying he had been to a conference in India where people there fighting eviction had gained strength from Vila Autódromo. He argues that "the Popular Plan is part of the struggle" for all these communities, saying "this fight isn't over". He concludes by adapting a popular phrase of resident's, saying "Vila Autódromo exists *because* it resists". Normally this is simply 'Vila Autódromo exists and resists'.

Next the co-ordinator from UFF (Federal Fluminense University), Regina Bienenstein, speaks about some of the details of the plan. She says the point of the plan is to show "it is possible for Vila Autódromo to stay" and that staying in the community is "the dream of the residents". The crowd chants again after she finished, indicative of the febrile atmosphere. Ana, makes her way up to the front to speak next, seemingly nervous, and Erika goes to stand by her daughter. Ana is about the same height as her mother, with light brown skin, long curly black hair and square glasses. She doesn't usually speak to crowds at events, instead preferring to help co-ordinate things behind the scenes. This week, however, she seems to be overcoming her shyness and asserting herself more than she has done previously. She starts by saying it is hard to follow everyone, as everyone has spoken so well. She thanks the people who have come out today and throughout the week for their support through the human rights violations here. She says

without this outpouring of support, it would be very difficult to continue the struggle. Each of her statements is punctuated by applause from the rapt crowd. Erika speaks again after her, thanking others who couldn't be here for their support, gesturing to the banners hung around, showing support from various organisations and favelas.

Luana speaks about the violence of her own eviction and the toll it took on her health. Approaching her sixties, her short black hair is beginning to grey, but even after eviction had a detrimental impact on her health, she continues to be a regular presence in the favela, fighting for her right. The sadness in her eyes, shining out from her brown face as she talks, tell their own story of what this community means to her. Prior to eviction, she represented the favela across the city, linking with social movements to build support for the favela. She breaks into tears as she speaks, and Erika goes to stand with her, comforting her with a warm embrace. Children are playing on the slide as Luana speaks, apparently oblivious to the event going on around them. The microphone is offered to anyone else who wishes to speak. The crowd is starting to thin; the event is ending. A few more people speak, including Federal Deputy Chico Alencar, who speaks of his support for the community, accusing city councillors of being in the pockets of developers. After the speeches wound down, and Amanda thanks the crowd of between 200-250 people for coming, I made my way to the entrance to the park, picking up a copy of the Popular Plan in exchange for a donation to support events. Soon after, I catch a bus back to the city, reading the plan on the way.

As I have argued throughout this thesis, the removal process and the resistance to evictions in Vila Autódromo is one example of a larger contest over what favelas are. In this, the contestation over evictions is a contest over place; how the place of the favela is defined. As I have argued in the previous chapters, the visibility brought by the Olympic Games gave increased importance to Vila Autódromo's case, expanding the available avenues for mobilisation and contention. This is not to say it made resistance either harder or easier as similarly strengthened opportunities and incentives applied to the municipal government's case for

eviction. Rather, the global spotlight served to increase the stakes in the contest, with this case likely to set precedent for futures struggles over favelas as a key moment in defining what favelas are. In this chapter, I explore how this contest is played out in the wider context of popular rights in Brazil. In essence, this chapter explores who has the right to decide which conceptualisation of place becomes dominant.

Rights in Brazil

The Popular Plan was formed by residents with the support of students and academics at Rio's two Federal universities (UFRJ and UFF). As Caldeira and Holston (2015) note, Brazilian laws and institutions have developed in such a way that lend themselves to popular participation in urban planning, particularly in recent years, a point I will explain in more detail shortly. The Popular Plan, developed over numerous meetings between residents and planners, included a particularly fierce insistence on public space. This, along with the strong emphasis on participation, was a key reason the plan won the Deutsche Bank Urban Age award, a US$80,000 prize awarded by the London School of Economics. The plan itself was constantly updated to reflect the changes in the community, with the plan below (Figure 7.3) the iteration presented in February 2016, with space for fifty homes.

Image removed for copyright purposes.

Image available at AMPVA (2016: 50-51)

Figure 7.3: The Popular Plan for Vila Autódromo. From AMPVA (2016: 50-51).

Reading the plan, it is clear from the first page of the introduction that this is a demand for the right to the city. Highlighted in a box on that first page (AMPVA 2016: 9) reads the statement "The Plan for Vila Autódromo is a Popular Plan. It is the community that decides and establishes the priorities!" along with the assertion that "we, residents of Vila Autódromo, took on the challenge of creating a plan where we show the city that we want, to which we have the right, and how to build it". This desire to shape their own space can also be seen in the way residents protested when the association building was destroyed, earlier that week. As municipal guards swarmed around the building fencing it off for demolition, they stood outside silently with their mouths gagged, symbolising the lack of voice they feel they have in shaping the future of Vila Autódromo.

The right to the city is a concept first introduced by Henri Lefebvre (1996 [1968]) in his book of the same name. Lefebvre himself was rather vague on what the right to the city entails, only that it is focussed on "all those who *inhabit*" (1996 [1968]: 158 emphasis in original). He bemoans the "Olympians of the new bourgeois aristocracy" (1996 [1968]: 159) who no longer inhabit cities, but move from place to place, hotel to hotel, yacht to yacht. David Harvey, himself heavily influenced by

Lefebvre's work, provides much needed clarity to the concept. Harvey (2008) grounds the right to the city in the observation that cities are shaped by people but also shape behaviour; as such, "in making the city man (sic) has remade himself" (Park 1967: 3). Building on this, Harvey (2008: 23) offers the following definition of the right to the city:

> The right to the city is far more than the individual liberty to access urban resources: it is a right to change ourselves by changing the city. It is, moreover, a common rather than an individual right since this transformation inevitably depends upon the exercise of a collective power to reshape the processes of urbanisation

The marking of lots before the launch of the Popular Plan can be described as a *mutirão*. This term is translated by Earle (2012: 107) as "mutual self-help building", and described by Brazilian urban planner Ermínia Maricato (1982: 71) as a "process of work grounded in co-operation", defined in opposition to capitalist system of buying and selling labour[16]. My own translation based on fieldwork is a 'work party', whereby people come together to build or renovate something which has communal value. The demarcation of lots that morning was by no means the only example of *mutirão* in Vila Autódromo, the renovation of the children's play area discussed in the introduction and the beginnings of building a community crèche were both processes of *mutirão*. Likewise, fellow RioOnWatch writers attended *mutirão* events in Rocinha to create a community garden: this process is common across the city, particularly in favelas.

Mutirão is a clear expression of the right to the city. It involves transforming the city to suit the needs of those involved, usually *favelados*. It is, in its purest sense, "the exercise of a collective power" (Harvey 2008: 23), but this power is not directed, as Harvey suggests, at reshaping the processes of urbanisation, but at reshaping the city directly. This perhaps reflects Harvey's western experience, whereby

[16] My translation of Maricato's (1982) words

transforming the city is possible only through modification of the laws and structures which guide urban policy. In favelas however, urban policy is decided upon by residents, sometimes haphazardly, and evolves according to need. Taking the two specific *mutirão* events in late 2016, we can see that residents of Vila Autódromo considered the welfare of their children important and in need of development; hence the renovation of the play area and the beginning of work on a community crèche. In this, collectively transforming the built environment transforms the conditions of their own existence: residents are exercising their right to the city.

The right to the city was a strongly supported idea amongst those who were critical of Rio's mega-events. It was a guiding theme of the Comitê Popular's criticism of the Olympics, that the event was not held for the benefit of those who inhabited the city, a theme expressed in the commonly posed rhetorical question "Olympics for whom?". Indeed, after the Olympic Games, the Comitê Popular restyled itself as the popular committee for the right to the city. Several academic members of the Comitê co-authored a book chapter examining the impact of sporting mega-events from the perspective of the right to the city, concluding that "there have been profound and on-going transformations to the urban dynamics of Rio de Janeiro… characterised by the subordination of public power to agents of the market" (Castro et al. 2015: 434).

The right to the city is a concern for Brazilian political parties too. Chico Alencar, the Federal Deputy who spoke at the launch of the Popular Plan is a member of the Freedom and Socialism Party (PSOL[17]), a party formed following a split in the ruling PT (Worker's Party) government, broadly speaking to the left of the PT. PSOL, in the months leading up to the municipal elections which followed the Olympic Games in October, initiated a programme called "if the city were ours" which held public meetings throughout the city to generate discussion about the changes residents would like to see. In essence, this programme was intended to generate urban

[17]PSOL is pronounced 'pessoal', the Portuguese word for 'people'

policy as a manifestation of the right to the city. PSOL, a relatively small party, had their best electoral showing ever in Rio's October elections, becoming the second largest party in the council while their candidate for Mayor, Marcelo Freixo, made it through to the second round. Freixo regularly spoke in support of Vila Autódromo and his election materials included photographs with residents of the favela.

Figure 7.4: Graffiti details one of the favelas legal protections: "Complementary Law 74, Area of Special Social Interest. We have the right to live here, all that remains is to see if there is still any morality in the justice system or if the corruption starts there. Not everyone has a price". March 2016.

Residents' claims of rights are a common feature of the graffiti dotted around the favela. This ranged from generic claims that they had "the right" to stay, to more specific claims based on legal protections afforded to the community such as those expressed in Figure 7.4 above. The Popular Plan (AMPVA 2016) also emphatically claims the right to housing for the community. A history of the community is included, including a section titled "the conquest of the right to housing" detailing previous struggles against eviction and the specific legal protections won through these struggles. Affirming this right to housing is one of the key objectives listed in the plan, including the detailed list below of the various legal elements to right to housing:

THE RIGHT TO HOUSING

- The Federal Constitution of 1988 **establishes housing as a fundamental social right**, in article 6.
- A United Nations General Assembly Resolution from 1966, subscribed to by Brazil in 1992, defends the right of all to adequate housing, characterised by accessible cost, by availability of services and infrastructure, accessibility, location, and cultural adequacy of housing. Included in this concept is **legal security of tenure and protection to the citizen from threats and forced evictions.**
- Federal Laws 11,124/2005, 11,481/2007 and 11,977/2009, as well as the State Constitution and Organic Municipal Law, determine the **priority use of lands owned by Public Power for housing as a social interest.**
- The residents of Vila Autódromo have titles from a **concession of the real right of use**, an instrument of urban policy used in land regularisation processes, that gives the right to use of public lands for popular housing. Legal provisions are in Decree-Law no. 271/1967, Art. 183 of the 1988 Constitution, Art. Of the City Statute and Art. 7 of Law 11,481/2007.
- Vila Autódromo was declared a **Zone of Special Social Interest (ZEIS)** for popular housing through Complementary Law No. 74/2005 of the Municipality of Rio de Janeiro. The ZEIS' have legal provision in Art. 182 of the 1988 Constitution, Art. 4, item V, paragraph f of the City Statute (Law 10,257/2001) and Art. 47, item V of Law 11,977/2009. (AMPVA 2016: 26 emphasis in original)

I will return to some of the specific legal protections shortly, but before going any further, we must first consider the nature of 'rights'. Academic research, Dembour (2010) explains, has traditionally approached human rights from four distinct schools of thought: as a natural element of the human condition, as political values adopted by societies, as claims made on behalf of the poor, and as an imperialist imposition. This research sits between the second and third of these schools, while also noting that the premise of human rights as natural and inalienable is rhetorically crucial for social movements. While I consider that rights are political values adopted by society, such values are the result of social movement organizing, of claims made by, or on behalf of, the marginalised.

Rights are often asserted to be inalienable protections afforded to particular aspects of human life, apparently applicable to all humanity. This understanding of rights, for Dembour (2010: 2-3) is "the most common and well-known definition of human rights" and has "traditionally represented the heart of the human rights orthodoxy". Such protections are considered to be the duty of the nation-state, and as such the conferring of rights is the responsibility of the state. As Hannah Arendt (1958 [1951]: 299) observes "not only did the loss of national rights in all instances entail the loss of human rights; the restoration of human rights… has been achieved so far only through the restoration or establishment of national rights". As such, human rights are indelibly tied to the nation-state, conferred by sovereign power (more on this shortly), not by some transcendental, natural source. International agreements and bodies such as the United Nation's Universal Declaration of Human Rights or the Inter-American Court of Human Rights are significant only because national governments choose to subscribe to them. They do not establish rights above national governments.

Claims of rights made by social movements, then, are necessarily claims on governments to provide or enforce protections for their citizens. Scholars have long questioned the usefulness of rights in challenging unequal power relations, considering human rights as a tool for producing consent to radical inequalities (Cox 1983). As David Harvey (2013) notes, rights are generally conceptualised as individualistic and property-based, sustaining a neoliberal capitalist order grounded in private ownership. As such, rights are contested, with social movements seeking to utilise the radical potential of rights to empower the powerless, while powerful interests seek to use rights to preserve existing unequal power structures (Tagliarina 2015). Stammers (2009) refers to this difficulty as the paradox of institutionalisation, whereby once codified in law rights stand in an ambiguous relation to power. "While they can still be used to challenge power, their origins and meanings as 'struggle concepts' can get lost or be switched in ways that result in human rights becoming a tool of power, not a challenge to it" (Stammers 2009: 3).

The right to housing is a good example of this paradox. Used by social movements, including Vila Autódromo residents and the Comitê Popular, it represents good quality housing for all with access to the city and amenities including education and health as well as protection from eviction, as described in the second bullet point from the list above. For many nation-states, however, housing is provided by the private sector, with profound implications for housing rights (Rolnik 2013). This individualises the problem of housing, suggesting those who lack adequate housing do so through their own failure, ignoring the exclusionary politics of exploitative capitalism (Hoover 2015).

As discussed in the previous chapter, residents of Vila Autódromo complained that the judicial system was not fulfilling its role in supporting the favela. Holston (2008) points out that Brazilian law has been used brilliantly by elites to preserve inequalities, particularly through land ownership laws. The history of Brazil is, Eduardo Galeano (1973) convincingly argues, a history of elite governance at the expense of the people. Through various legal and political strategies, land ownership laws are used to maintain the privileged economic position of Brazilian elites, an example of rights being used to maintain the status quo. As Holston (2008:19) observes, "this use of law not only sabotaged universal application but also estranged most Brazilians from the institution of law". The allegations of judicial corruption regularly made by residents of Vila Autódromo appear to confirm this estrangement.

As I have argued elsewhere (Talbot and Carter 2018), the demand for the recognition and respect of the right to housing was an implicit element of the resistance to evictions in Vila Autódromo. At times, this became explicit, such as in Carlos Vainer's speech which situated the resistance in the global context of housing struggles. However, established human rights NGO's, such as Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch focussed their attentions on police violence in the lead-up to the Olympic Games. The critique of market-based housing provision inherent within the right to housing as it was understood by residents was deemed unacceptable in pre-Olympic Rio (Talbot and Carter 2018). Before Rio won

the right to host the Olympics, according to most accounts (see Perlman 2010; Faulhaber and Azevedo 2015), the threat of evictions had been largely removed from Rio's favelas since the end of military rule in 1985 and the implementation of the 1988 constitution.

The Brazilian Federal Constitution includes provisions guaranteeing the right to housing. Article 6 of the constitution, following a constitutional amendment in 2000, guarantees the right to housing as a social right (*Constitução Federal* 2017 [1988]). However, as law professor Jorge Miranda (cited by Ferreira and Fernandes 2000) points out, social rights are considered to be expectations for governments, rather than real, enforceable guarantees. Social rights demarcate areas in which the state should pursue policies to support citizens, as opposed to providing protections enforceable through courts. In particular, social rights, unlike individual rights, do not have strong legal support and effective judicial procedures to ensure respect for rights. As such, jurist Flávia Piovesan (quoted by Ferreira and Fernandes 2000) argues that violations of social rights are "the result of both the absence of strong support and government intervention and the absence of international pressure in favour of such intervention". The right to housing in Brazil, we can therefore conclude, is affected by the paradox of institutionalisation (Stammers 2009) in that the state is unwilling to fully guarantee the right to housing due to the radical transformation that recognising such a right demands.

Insurgent citizenship

Prior to the constitutional amendment in 2000, the right to housing was included in Article 7 of the constitution indirectly, listed as part of the rights of urban and rural workers (*Constitução Federal* 2017 [1988]). Although this also includes a statement that for the purpose of these rights ther term 'worker' also applies to all who aim at improving their social condition, the wording draws attention to an important facet of rights in Brazil. Rights, as conferred by the sovereign through citizenship, have not always been applied universally to all. The particular example of rights for

workers harks back to the era of Getúlio Vargas' dictatorship (1930-1945), when rights were extended to workers, creating formal distinctions within citizenship. Anthropologist James Holston (2008) refers to this as differentiated citizenship, whereby universal citizenship also serves to exclude certain parts of the population from rights. Citizenship is simultaneously inclusive and inegalitarian. As Earle (2012: 99) summarises, "people were not discriminated against as non-citizens, but because they were particular kinds of citizens".

Holston's central thesis is that a radical new insurgent citizenship has been claimed by marginalised Brazilians. Crucial to this is autoconstruction, the process by which the urban poor built their homes in the peripheries of Brazil's cities. But it is more than just constructing a building: autoconstruction is "a domain of symbolic elaboration about the experience of becoming propertied and participating in mass consumer markets" (Holston 1991: 447). Essentially, through building their homes and communities, marginalised populations earned their citizenship and their rights. By conforming to traditional markers of rights and citizenship such as home ownership, taxation and consumption, urban workers constructed their own insurgent citizenship (Holston 2008). This does not fundamentally transform the nature of differentiated citizenship; rather it allows marginalised populations to access rights which were previously not ceded to them.

The land where Vila Autódromo stands was unoccupied when the fishing community built their homes there in the 1960's. It correlates perfectly to the urban peripheries where Holston (2008) based his research. The difference in this case is that as Barra da Tijuca experienced a real estate boom, the area around the favela was developed, leading to eviction pressures. Throughout this process of development we can see insurgent citizenship in action. In 1994, through resisting an eviction attempt pushed by then-local deputy mayor Eduardo Paes, the community won a 99-year lease to the State-owned land on which their homes stood. In 2004, the favela was designated a special zone of social interest, giving further rights to the residents. As such, Vila Autódromo provides an instructive

example of how rights and citizenship are claimed by *favelados* based on the process of autoconstruction.

Holston (2008) proposed three core elements of urban citizenship which exist simultaneously: citizenship earned through autoconstruction, the differentiated nature of rights, and text-based rights in new legal frameworks. Earle (2012) cogently argues that Holston focuses on the first two, underplaying the importance of text-based rights, a conclusion I fully agree with on the basis of my fieldwork experience. As can be seen in examples cited previously, such as the list of rights quoted from the Popular Plan and the graffiti scrawled across the walls of Vila Autódromo (see Figure 7.4), text-based rights were a crucial tool for residents in their resistance to eviction. It is highly possible that Holston's (2008) work simply pre-dates the significance of these rights: his fieldwork was conducted in 1995-1997 and 2001-2002, prior to President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva's time in office.

Under Lula's presidency (2003-2010), and Rousseff's (2011-2016) after she succeeded him, numerous legal advances pertaining to rights were made. Indeed, many of the Federal laws quoted in the Popular Plan above were passed under the governance of their Workers' Party. Holston (2008) rightly emphasises the potential of the constitution of 1988, written from scratch after the transition to democracy in the early 1980's. This document was highly egalitarian, distributing a wide range of rights across all levels of Brazilian society – in theory if not always in practice. Drawing on the analyses of Brazilian jurists (in Ferreira and Fernandes 2000) and the list of rights outlined in the Popular Plan (AMPVA 2016: 26), I argue that the constitution grew in importance for social movements as laws were passed to support the right to housing. The concept of social rights as a guide for government policy appears to have resulted in the passage of laws providing stronger protections for the right to housing.

Holston (2008: 17-18) provides an example of a lower-class black woman vocally asserting her rights to a higher-class white man in a bank queue, illustrating the interplay between the new insurgent citizenship and the old differentiated

citizenship. He argues that these "two formulations coexist, unhappily and dangerously" (Holston 2008: 18) creating a contradictory formulation of citizenship in Brazil. This passage is indicative of the conspicuous absence of discussion of text-based rights in Holston's (2008) work. I argue, following Earle (2012) that while contradictions still exist, laws supporting constitutional rights, particularly the right to housing, have strengthened insurgent forms of citizenship, giving new rights and influence to marginalised populations and social movements.

Unfortunately, there is a but. In fact, there are several. The unhappy and dangerous relationship between insurgent and differentiated citizenship still exists, with most of those evicted from their homes in the lead-up to the Olympics living in marginalised communities. The impeachment of Dilma Rousseff ushered in a new government in what many describe as a coup, with the new government appearing to show little regard for rights across various sections of Brazilian society. If the PT governments of Lula and Dilma were of the masses, the government of Michel Temer and the PMDB represents the governance of elites in their own interest which characterises much of Brazil's history, a commonality through periods of dictatorship and democracy alike. The limited advances in rights for *favelados* made under Lula and Dilma do not appear to be safe under the new administration.

Sovereignty and rights

However, despite the advances that have been made in guaranteeing the right to housing, the homes in Vila Autódromo were demolished with new homes built by the city for just 20 families. We can see here a discrepancy, between the right to housing as conceptualised by residents, including security against arbitrary eviction and the right to housing as applied in law. Brazil, like most modern states, reserves the right to remove people from their homes for public works through eminent domain orders. Many of the homes in Vila Autódromo were removed through such orders. Others were removed through a process of negotiation, whereby residents agreed to leave in exchange for an agreed level of compensation, in this case either

money or alternative housing, or both. These negotiations were conducted with the implicit and at times explicit threat that refusing to negotiate would mean being left with nothing. I want to focus on one particular case which didn't fit either of these descriptions, as an example of the state of exception.

The state of exception is a well-used concept in relation to the Olympic Games. Boykoff (2013) suggests that the Olympic induce a state of exception in host cities, allowing for the passage of laws which would not otherwise be palatable due to the impending mega-event. There appears to be significant consensus around this analysis of the effect of mega-events on host cities (Vainer 2011; Coaffee 2015; La Barre 2016). Such an interpretation of the state of exception, I argue, is flawed. While Boykoff (2013) and others have surely hit upon a genuine phenomenon, an exceptional condition in which host cities find themselves, this is not a state of exception per se. The state of exception is specific concept, referring to a moment in which the rights of citizens are denied by the sovereign. The examples Boykoff (2013) provides, such as the passage of legislation limiting civil liberties, do not constitute a denial of rights through the state of exception. While it may be a denial of rights, it occurs through the normal process of governance: there is nothing legally exceptional about it. The exception is an extra-legal concept, in that it occurs outside the normal rules of jurisprudence (Schmitt 1985 [1922]). What Boykoff (2013) and others call a state of exception is more accurately described as a state of exemption, wherein legal protections are twisted and bent, but not broken.

This distinction matters due to the wider connotations of the state of exception. The exception reveals sovereignty – only the sovereign can define the exception (Schmitt 1985 [1922]). For this reason, the state of exception is important in our present discussion of rights. Where the state of exception occurs, sovereign power is at play, shaping events. Agamben (1998) explains the relationship between sovereignty and rights through *homo sacer*, the person who can be killed with impunity. In essence, *homo sacer* represents a person with no rights, the polar opposite of the sovereign. By virtue of national citizenship, the sovereign confers rights upon *homo sacer*, creating citizens. In the context of favelas, the insurgent

citizenship won through autoconstruction generates a recognition of the rights of *favelados* which previously did not exist. As Holston (2008) acknowledges, this is a conflicted and contested recognition.

In the case of Vila Autódromo, I argue that sovereign power is at play in the reshaping of the community. While the majority of the demolitions occurred within legal, established norms of practice, I will focus here on one exceptional case. Through seeing this eviction as occurring in a state of exception, we see the influence of sovereign power on the outcome of the community's struggle. As such, we are able to analyse the agreement made between the municipal government and residents to build new homes as an agreement between the sovereign and citizens, conferring rights on residents.

Firstly, in order to establish that a state of exception existed, I must first expound the details of the norm of demolitions. Those who negotiated with the municipal government were given chance to leave in their own time, before workers demolished their homes or, where demolition was unfeasible, made it uninhabitable by knocking chunks out of the walls with sledgehammers. Negotiations were conducted privately with individual families, meaning different families with similar houses received wildly different compensation packages, a sore point with many residents. In particular, residents and activists condemned what they called a campaign of psychological terrorism to create inhospitable conditions for those living in the favela and force them to negotiate with the city. Those whose homes were demolished under eminent domain provisions faced a different process, with demolitions conducted with little warning, these being the most controversial evictions in the favela. The example I provide here is of the residents' association, as that is the only demolition for which I was in attendance throughout. From my partial attendances at other demolitions, as well as descriptions from residents and other observers, the demolition of the residents' association followed the usual process.

I had stayed in Vila Autódromo for the past two nights, since an injunction on the demolition of the association had been struck down. When I had first arrived, an activist from the Comitê Popular had explained the situation, saying that the building could be demolished legally, but still complaining about immoral laws and the corrupt judiciary. I wake up early and make my way over to the association building where other supporters of the community are gathering. The municipal guards arrive in force at 7am sharp, at least a hundred of them literally bussed in to the community. They set about cordoning off the building, moving residents and activists who are shouting their protest against the demolition easily, with little resistance. Someone, I think an official from the municipal government, hands demolition papers to Augusto, president of the association. He stands in a corner checking the legal documents, occasionally joined by residents. He seems to consent to the demolition, implying the papers were all in order. The residents had heard from the Public Defenders a few days ago that there was nothing more they could do to halt this demolition. The municipal guards bring in a digger to do the actual work of demolishing the building. A few activists half-heartedly attempt to block it, joining hands to form a barricade across the road. The digger simply drives around them. I wonder why the residents don't seem to be trying to stop the demolition, but there is nothing they can do – it is perfectly legal.

This account of demolition in Vila Autódromo, expounded in more detail in chapter 5, represents the norm. While aspects of this process, in particular the lack of warning and general pressure and coercion, were highlighted as abuses of the human right to housing (Comitê Popular 2015: 38-39), such abuses are commonplace in Brazil. As such, they do not constitute a state of exception and would be more accurately described as occurring in a state of exemption. Indeed, since favelas first sprang up in Rio at the end of the 19th century, they have faced threats of violent evictions. By taking a historical view, it becomes clear that the removal of favelas does not constitute a state of exception – even if it may not have been legal, favela removal is an established norm (Perlman 2010). However, after the end of military rule in the 1980's, favela evictions were dramatically curbed, by all accounts (see Perlman 2010; Faulhaber and Azevedo 2015). This has been put

down to the new rights contained in the 1988 constitution, as well as the sheer political difficulty of abusing a significant section of the electorate.

Nevertheless, mega-events brought the reality of evictions back to Brazil's favelas (Magalhães 2013). Rio was clearly more affected by this trend than any other city due to the higher proportion of residents living in favelas and particularly the greater scale of concentrated urban development required to host the Olympic Games compared to the World Cup. Other cities across Brazil saw a resurgence of favela evictions linked to mega-events, from Fortaleza (Pinheiros et al. 2015) to Belo Horizonte (Freitas et al. 2015), from Manaus (Ribeiro 2015) to Porto Alegre (Leal-Laborgue and Cabette 2013). This however is not a state of exception, as scholars such as Boykoff (2013) argue, due to the legality of these removals. The hosting of the Olympic Games created a political climate in which these evictions could be conducted: a state of exemption. This, however, is distinct from the state of exception, with deference to legal due process shown throughout the lengthy legal battle over evictions in Vila Autódromo (for the most part prior to my arrival there). The state of exemption is a political condition, whereas the state of exception, as I will discuss in more detail shortly, is a legal condition.

Despite the laws passed by the Federal Government, there remains little protection for residents whose homes sit on land designated for public use. As is common around the world, the Brazilian government reserves the right to claim land for public works, which in this case includes the construction of stadia for mega-events. Of course, there is a significant question of whether building a stadium should be classified as a public work, but that is not at stake here. The important point here is that whether removals were completed through eminent domain provisions or through negotiations and compensation, these processes abided by Brazilian law. While activists claimed such processes were immoral, or that the law was unjust, or that the judiciary was corrupt, they did not (to my knowledge) claim that these removals were illegal. As such, these evictions did not occur in a state of exception.

However, focussing on one particular demolition in February 2016, I argue that sovereign power was exercised in Vila Autódromo. The home of Augusto, president of the residents' association, was demolished illegally. I should say here that I am no legal expert; I rely on what residents told me and my knowledge of the usual eviction process in determining the legality of this act. This allows me to determine that this was an exceptional event. I was not there for the demolition itself – myself and a couple of others from RioOnWatch responded to a call for coverage from the residents that morning. When we arrived, the demolition was done, the dust settling on the rubble behind the football pitch, close to the entrance to the favela. However, Augusto was nowhere to be seen, instead Erika was stood near the rubble answering questions from a journalist. Listening in, we hear that Augusto had been away, staying with family – our first clue that this was not a normal demolition. When we ask why the residents who were here didn't try to stop the demolition, she responds with a simple question: "what could we do against armed troops"?

Aware that we've not had breakfast, Erika offers us some food and we follow her to the church where she explains what happened in more detail. As we walk, a new minibus full of municipal guards arrives: a changing of the guard it seems, as nobody panics. . Erika explains that municipal guards are now a constant presence in the community, even overnight, camping in their minibus close to the childrens play area. She suspects that they had noticed Augusto was not there and seized the opportunity to demolish his home. Augusto's home was in a strange situation, Erika explains as she fills plastic bottles from a water dispenser on the wall at the back of the church. He had previously been removed and his old home demolished, but unwilling to leave the community he had built a new home on a small patch of land behind the residents' association. It was this home, along with another, unoccupied home, that had been demolished today. This land is part of the resident's association and is therefore covered by an injuction preventing demolition of that building. Another RioOnWatch volunteer heard a different story from Amanda however, she apparently said that there was a garden that had been used by residents which wasn't covered by the injunction. Someone had begun building a

home here, and had then accepted rehousing offer from the government, which provided the pretext to the demolition of all the homes.

Erika explains that while “we [residents] will never give up” in their resistance, it is much harder to stop a demolition when it is not your home, as you don’t know all the details. This is even worse when there are lots of what she calls “shock troops” (municipal guards in heavy body armour) surrounding you. Augusto is on his way back to the favela and Erika talks more broadly about the process while we wait, explaining that she doesn’t really know why they’re being evicted, but her sense is that they want to clear “these shacks from the ground” and remove the “ugly association”, chiming with what others have said about these evictions being a beatification project. After a short while, Augusto arrives back in Vila Autódromo. Clearly hurt by this demolition, he stands infront of the rubble which used to be his home and speaks to us and a few other journalists who have made the trip here, with the demolition papers in his hands. These papers, Augusto points out, have someone else’s name on them as the owner of the home: someone he’s never even heard of. He affirms clearly that the municipal government had no legal right to demolish his home. With emotion straining his gruff voice, he complains that “justice doesn’t exist for the poor”, criticising Brazil’s reputation: “people think that Brazil is wonderful, but for whom? Not for the poor”.

We can see clear contrasts with this account of demolition and others. In other cases, residents didn’t resist because the demolition was legal, in this case it was due to fear of violence. In normal demolitions, the papers were checked before the demolition was started – this was not the case as Augusto was not there. Instead of waiting for him to return, the demolition proceeded without his permission. Had he been there to check the papers, he would have spotted an irregularity, with another person’s name listed as the owner. As president of the residents’ association, Augusto can reasonably be expected to recognise the names of all residents, past and present, yet he did not recognise the name on the papers authorising the demolition of his house.

As such, what we see in the case of Augusto's eviction is an abnormal, illegal denial of rights by the municipal government – a state of exception. Where Boykoff (2013) and others argue that the Olympics create a state of exception, the reality is more complex. The state of exception to which these scholars refer is a nebulous condition, covering a wide variety of issues in the seven years of build up to the event and is better described as a state of exemption. The state of exception, that is, the temporary suspension of legal order (Agamben 2005), is a specific condition relating to the extra-legal denial of rights and it does not last for seven years. Evictions, which are usual in the lead-up to the Games, are not indicative in themselves of a state of exception as many scholars argue. Legal processes exist in most countries allowing the state to seize property for public works in exchange for compensation. As such, I argue that the Olympics do not create a state of exception per se, but they can be used by governments as an excuse to create a state of exception.

As we can see from the example of Augusto's eviction, sovereign power is reshaping Vila Autódromo, transforming it from a "peaceful and orderly community" to an area prime for real estate development. While in most cases evictions do not occur in a state of exception, that some do ultimately reveals who has the right to define the place of Vila Autódromo. From this, we can also examine the agreement reached between residents and the municipal government as an exercise in sovereign power. After Eduardo Paes announced that the government would build homes for the residents on 8 March 2016, there was a period of negotiation when residents pushed for changes to the plan before accepting it. This lasted around a month, with several changes made before residents agreed to the plan (Healy and Reist 2016).

Several modifications were made to the plan, as can be seen in the contrasting plans below, in Figures 7.5 and 7.6. Both these plans show a stark difference to the Popular Plan (Figure 7.4 above). While much of the Mayor's plan stays the same, certain demands made by residents were agreed to. This included enlarging the homes from 46 to 56 square metres, as well as each home being on a single lot, not

connected. More public space, a key feature of the Popular Plan, was added including a new residents' association building as well as space for commercial use. Initially, the residents would be required to leave while construction took place, whereas it was agreed that only those houses which were in the way of the new construction would be demolished, and temporary housing would be provided in Vila Autódromo. While I was not present at the meeting between residents and the municipal government, the relative dearth of major changes in the plan is indicative of the power the authorities exerted to keep the more radical ideas contained within the Popular Plan off the table (see Bachrach and Baratz 1962).

Importantly however, the plan was agreed between the city and community, not between the city and individuals. As Erika proudly explained to me in May as she showed some visiting researchers around the community, this is the first time a favela housing agreement has been collectively reached. Sarah, with her wealth of experience working in favelas across the city, confirmed this to be the case. Even with these successes the agreement had its critics, including myself at the time, arguing that the municipal government was seeking to erase the favela, motivated by increasing the value of the land (see Talbot 2016b).

Image removed for copyright purposes.

Image available at: https://riorealblog.files.wordpress.com/2016/03/vila-autodromo2.pdf

Figure 7.5: Mayor Eduardo Paes' initial plan for Vila Autódromo. The large buildings nearby are schools, which the community insisted they didn't want or need. Photo from Michaels (2016).

Image removed for copyright purposes.

Image available at Vila Autodromo Facebook page

Figure 7.6: The agreed plan for upgrades. While the schools remain, there is a noticeable increase in public space. Photo from Vila Autódromo community Facebook page.

As such, the plan to change the community was communally agreed with the intention of changing the character of the area. As we see from the demolition of Augusto's home, the process of evictions in Vila Autódromo was forced through the exercise of sovereign power. From this, we can conclude that this plan represents the sovereign ceding the right to remain living on the land to the residents of Vila Autódromo. Not just a recognition of the right to housing, as a collectively agreed plan including significant emphasis on public space, this also represents a sovereign recognition of the collective right to the city.

Conclusions

The Popular Plan for Vila Autódromo showed that an alternative urban policy was compatible with the Olympic Park, even that such a policy was attractive with lower costs than the municipal government's policy of evictions. Developed by leading

urban planners following principles of participatory planning, the plan placed strong emphasis on the value of public space. This plan was a key prong of residents fight to remain in their community. Throughout this plan and other elements of activism residents emphasised their rights, principally the right to housing and the right to the city. The right to housing holds some basis in Brazilian law, but is nebulous and difficult to enforce, considered more as a guideline for public policy rather than a firm guarantee for citizens. Through examining the laws residents claim are violated, we can see the paradox of institutionalisation (Stammers 2009), as the meaning of the right to housing shifts from protection against eviction to protection of real estate values.

Against a historical context where rights have not traditionally been respected, favela residents claim their rights and citizenship through insurgent forms of citizenship (Holston 2008). By constructing their own neighbourhood in Rio's periphery, residents of Vila Autódromo claimed their citizenship by conforming to traditional standards of citizenship including home ownership and taxation. Through resisting eviction attempts in the past, specific legal rights were gained, including a 99-year lease to the land and the designation as a special zone of social interest. As such, Vila Autódromo residents had protections conferred upon them through sovereign power. While the majority of evictions did not explicitly contradict these protections, there were some examples where evictions occurred in a state of exception, revealing the work of sovereign power. Importantly, these exceptions were limited and temporary, not a lengthy state of exception as some contend the Olympics engender. Given that sovereign power was reshaping Vila Autódromo, the agreement to remain in the community can be seen as a significant victory for activists, as an implicit recognition of the legitimacy of the right to the city.

Chapter 8: Conclusions

“Rio”, it was predicted in the months before the Games, “will host a trouble-free Olympics by doing what it does best: covering up the damage and showing its artificial face” (Williamson 2016). The treatment of Vila Autódromo is a perfect example of this, with the messy informal charm of the favela gone, replaced by twenty small, identical houses, whitewashed to ensure a uniformly inoffensive image. The municipal government’s policy towards favelas in the Olympic city has been starkly reminiscent of the last military dictatorship: removing these communities from wealthy areas and moving them westward to more sparsely populated, isolated parts of the city. Yet this process has not gone uncontested. As we have seen, residents of Vila Autódromo, supported by activists across the city, mounted a fierce campaign resisting evictions.

None of this could be considered a surprise, as we saw in chapter 2. Such treatment of favelas was to be expected, given the history of neglect and violence at the hands of the state (Goldstein 2003; Perlman 2010), coupled with the growing knowledge of damaging impacts of hosting sporting mega-events (Lenksyj 2008; Boykoff 2013). That said, questions remained about how the global influence of the IOC would impact on Rio’s informal communities, particularly given the historically uneven distribution of rights in Brazil (Holston 2008). With a growth in grassroots activism against the Games in recent years (Boykoff 2014), resistance and contestation were also to be expected, but there had been little engagement with social movement theories among Olympic researchers. Alongside this, social movement theorists have only recently begun to engage with spatial theory (Martin and Miller 2003; Frenzel, Feigenbaum and McCurdy 2014), with many analyses taking a superficial approach to space, missing a deeper level of understanding about how space is constantly constructed. This takes a western centric approach to urban space, deemphasising spaces constructed from below. Finally, questions remained about how activists could use media to shape the discourse around Rio

2016, especially given the history of non-Western countries struggling to overcome old stereotypes (Manzenreiter 2010).

This ethnography has explored these issues based on one year of fieldwork in Brazil. Working with several groups contesting the Rio 2016 Olympic Games, the research focused on resistance to evictions in the Vila Autódromo favela because it was an active issue during the fieldwork period. Through observations, conversations and photographs, I documented the struggle for residents to remain in their homes. This was not limited to the favela as a fieldwork site, drawing in various different groups with different objectives who came together to support residents in their campaign in various ways, particularly RioOnWatch and the Comitê Popular. Throughout this research, I have grappled with the issues of representing others and translating experience onto the page, constantly reflecting on my own practice as a researcher.

In chapter 4 Lefebvre's (1991) conceptualisation of socially produced space was problematised based on the specific complexities it holds when considering favelas and informal communities. Lefebvre's analysis precludes the prospect of urban space being produced by marginalised populations. Applying the lesser used terms for Lefebvre's triad (perceived, conceived, and lived space) to Vila Autódromo reveals that Lefebvre ascribes too much power to the state for its role in conceiving space. This ignores the possibility for popular conceptions of space to be manifested in the physical geography of the city, reinforcing these conceptions though their physical form. Thus, the contentious evictions process is part of a larger conflict that lies at the heart of all informal communities. On the one hand, favelas are home to populations who would otherwise be homeless, representing an innovative use of space for communities who built their own homes and a strong sense of community and, in the case of Vila Autódromo, safety. On the other hand, favelas are dangerous places, illegal and illegitimate by their very nature, with poor infrastructure and endemic poverty, providing a haven for criminals. The contention over evictions in Vila Autódromo is a manifestation of this conflict, with different

groups actively trying to enforce their conception of the space. At stake then, is the legitimacy of favelas as a form of housing and as a community.

In this context, residents and their supporters sought to (re)construct the favela as a friendly, communal space through Occupy Vila Autódromo events. Outside these events, the favela was a desolate place with rubble strewn across the community, seeming more like a construction site than a residential area. The tactics of the municipal government physically degraded the favela in this way as well as removing access to services in an attempt to make Vila Autódromo and inhospitable space. Occupy Vila Autódromo pushed back against this, inviting people to the favela for a wide variety of events, from football tournaments and documentary screenings to live performances and book launches. In doing so, residents and their supporters presented an idealised vision of the favela as a safe space where people enjoy living in a tight-knit community. The location of the favela directly adjacent to the main Olympic park gave visibility to the community, with Occupy events providing a platform for residents to present their space on their own terms, without the direct threat of demolitions. These events were crucial in turning the proximate political opportunity brought by the Games to residents' advantage.

These Occupy events were liminal spaces, as discussed in chapter 5. The favela was temporarily transformed, inverting the normal sense of abandonment and fear to a joyous celebration of community. This separation from everyday life, both for residents and supporters, engendered a temporally and spatially limited communitas among participants. This inclusive, welcoming atmosphere challenged the stereotypical narrative of favelas as dangerous, no-go areas, instead presenting a pleasant, culturally vibrant community. These liminal events were charged with anti-structure, allowing for radical reimaginings of social structures which can stimulate transformations beyond the liminal moment. In this, Occupy Vila Autódromo is a direct challenge to existing power structures in Brazil which marginalise and degrade informal communities.

In these liminal moments, space was transformed into place for those participating. A concrete notion of Vila Autódromo as a place formed, based on the spatial values of community, safety and friendliness inscribed on the space of Occupy Vila Autódromo and bound up with the radical reimagining of Brazilian society associated with anti-structure. This place emphasises the community which legitimately resides in the favela, not the destructive power of the state as is the case during demolitions. Importantly, this sense of place endures despite physical changes to the space: even as more houses are torn down, the notion of a friendly, welcoming community endures in the imagination of residents and their supporters, reinforced by regular Occupy events. In essence, Vila Autódromo became an idea, transcending the physical space. This allowed for the place to be spread across geographical scales, around the world, through stories told about the place.

The sense of the place was spread using social media. The efficacy of this relied heavily on the attention brought to the favela by the Olympic Games: the proximate political opportunity. A campaign of videos demanding an urbanisation plan for the favela garnered significant momentum, helped along by prominent public intellectuals, politicians and celebrities, spreading the stories about the friendly, communal and safe place of Vila Autódromo. RioOnWatch's live reporting from the favela on Twitter served a similar purpose, spreading these stories in English to a global audience. This social media output served to emphasise the legitimacy and community spirit in Vila Autódromo, challenging the dominant narrative of favelas which underpinned the logic of removals. Spreading this sense of place was not merely about Vila Autódromo, but was also wrapped up with ideological critiques of capitalist principles of accumulation, particularly real estate development. As such, social media became an important tool for spreading counter-hegemonic ideas across geographical scales, conditional on the attention brought by the Olympic Games.

Similarly, the sense of place and the associated critiques of Rio's municipal government policy were spread through stories told about Vila Autódromo in the

traditional media, as discussed in chapter 6. In relation to the international press, a significant portion of reporting was influenced by RioOnWatch, both through direct collaboration with journalists and through published stories on the site serving as background research for journalists. RioOnWatch sought to challenge the dominant narrative of favelas as sites of violence and poverty through reporting on resistance and innovation in favelas. In doing so, they challenged the logic behind various negligent or harmful state policies in favelas, including gentrification and police violence, as well as forced evictions. In doing so, the NGO sought to transform the discourse about favelas in order to improve policies for informal communities.

In their work with journalists, RioOnWatch attempted to influence coverage to provide greater insight into positive aspects of life in favelas, including affordability, culture, sustainability and community spirit. Having built up a reputation as English-speaking experts on favelas, the NGO was frequently contacted by journalists for assistance in reporting on these communities. Often these were parachute journalists with little knowledge of Brazil or the Portuguese language, many of whom had been told by their managers back home that favelas were too dangerous to visit. RioOnWatch was able to exercise a form of network power (Castells 2011), setting the rules of inclusion with these journalists through a process of negotiation. This ranged from discussions about which favelas to visit and which topics to cover to choosing who to speak to when visiting favelas and contesting background knowledge of favelas. Vila Autódromo was important in RioOnWatch's attempt to influence coverage of favelas for two reasons. Firstly, its location next to the Olympic park linked it clearly to the Olympic Games, which was ultimately the subject of most journalist's reporting. Secondly, Vila Autódromo is very different from the stereotypical image of a favela as a zone of criminality and poverty, making it easy for RioOnWatch to highlight the positive aspects of informal communities there.

This amounted to a larger discourse intervention in the run up to the Olympic Games, as I have elaborated on further elsewhere (Talbot 2018). RioOnWatch saw the opportunity to effect a lasting change in the discourse around favelas through

influencing media coverage during Rio de Janeiro's moment in the global media spotlight. Often, they framed these issues in terms of accuracy, appealing to journalists' desire to precisely describe issues in the city. In doing so, they were engaged in what Bourdieu (1989) calls a symbolic struggle over the power to define what favelas are. In this, the sense of place generated in Occupy Vila Autódromo was valuable in showing that RioOnWatch's version of favelas corresponds, at least to a degree, to the real world.

Such an intervention is necessary due to the precarious nature of legal protections in Brazil, as discussed in chapter 7. Residents of Vila Autódromo framed their evictions in terms of human rights, arguing evictions violated a slew of Brazilian laws. For the vast majority of Brazilian history, rights have not been distributed equally across society, with the poor often excluded from legal recourse for justice. In recent years, Holston (2008) argues, marginalised Brazilians have claimed their own insurgent citizenship by building their own homes in the urban periphery, conforming to traditional standards of citizenship such as home ownership and paying taxation. In doing so, the poor have claimed their rights. Advances in legal protections have been made since redemocratisation in the 1980's, particularly under the PT governments of Lula and Dilma. The inclusion of the social right to housing in the constitution, the city statute and areas of special social interest legislation in particular were cited by residents as being violated by the municipal government.

The evictions then, for the most part, do not break with established laws or norms, however immoral they may be. As such, to suggest that the Olympic Games occur within a state of exception in the sense discussed by Agamben (1998; 2005) and Schmitt (1985 [1922]) is inaccurate. While the return of evictions to Rio was a startling change in municipal policy towards informal communities (Magalhães 2013), this occurred in an unusual political climate, rather than an unusual legal climate. As such, I argue that this political climate should be distinguished from the existing legal concept of a state of exception, instead referring to the political urgency the Olympic deadline brings as a state of exemption. With that said,

however, in the specific case of Vila Autódromo, there is evidence of a state of exception in the demolition of Augustus' home, which broke with existing norms and (allegedly) laws. This suggests that sovereign power was guiding the evictions in Vila Autódromo, forcing through evictions where legal means of removal had been exhausted.

Much of this legislation, however, is not intended to provide guarantees of protection for the poor; rather, it is intended to clarify the obligations of government. The social right to housing does not guarantee all citizens should have adequate housing, it merely places an obligation on State and Municipal governments to provide housing for their citizenry. Yet residents claimed that their right to housing and their right to the city were being violated by the evictions, exposing Stammers' (2009) paradox of institutionalisation. Their Popular Plan for how the favela could co-exist with the Olympic Park was a clear declaration of their right to shape their environment, their right to the city. While this plan was not implemented, the municipal government eventually accepted their right to participate in the planning of their community, albeit in a piecemeal way. This represents a tacit acknowledgement of the right to the city, made all the more meaningful by the sovereign power which forced evictions through. However, recent political developments paint a bleaker picture for the Brazilian poor, with the unelected government forcing through legislation stripping many rights from workers and the poor.

Contributions to knowledge

This thesis makes several contributions to knowledge around four broad themes: the Olympics & protest, informal communities, space & social movements and activists & journalists. These contributions fit within and across these themes, weaving different bodies of knowledge together and contributing to debates in several fields.

As set out in the rationale for this study, the focus on protest at the Olympics Games provides a new lens for examining the Olympic Games, only previously touched on by Boykoff (2014) and briefly by Lenskyj (2000; 2008) and Gaffney (2016). Only Boykoff (2014) thoroughly engages with literature from social movement studies in his research, applying ideas from social movement theory such as framing and the radical flank effect to the Olympic event. This thesis goes further, bringing the (sub)fields of Olympic and social movement studies together more comprehensively. This thesis, due to its field location, also brings existing ideas from the study of informal communities to these (sub)fields of knowledge. By linking these three fields of enquiry, this thesis provides a new lens through which to think about protest at the Olympic Games.

This thesis makes a significant contribution to ongoing debates about the nature of human rights, particularly in relation to informal communities, housing rights and the Olympic Games. Despite residents of Vila Autódromo repeatedly asserting that their rights were being violated, the eviction process continued on regardless. Legally, Vila Autódromo had significantly stronger protections against eviction than many of Rio's favelas, yet violations of these protections persisted. This provides a clear example of the paradox of institutionalisation (Stammers 2009) whereby the meaning of housing rights for social movements is transformed as it is applied legally. This conflict over what human rights are is of fundamental importance for the IOC in the coming years in light of the announcement in February 2017 of a human rights clause in the Olympic Host City Contract for the 2024 event onwards (Etchells 2017). The question of who defines human rights, discussed in chapter 7, is of paramount importance for the implementation of this new human rights clause.

Alongside the integration of research on the Olympics, informal communities and social movements, this thesis brings the spatial into the study of social movements. Previous research, particularly on movements such as Occupy Wall Street and the Arab Spring, has focussed on meanings attached to public space that can be seized by movements (see Juris 2012; Kohn 2013; Frenzel, Feigenbaum and McCurdy

2014). This research tends to be rather superficially focused on the dynamism and inherent malleability of space, discussing how meanings ascribed to spaces are captured by movements. In this thesis, I argue for a more comprehensive use of spatial theory in the study of social movements, focussing not just on how movements co-opt spatially ascribed meanings but also on how urban movements actively construct these meanings.

Specifically, by problematising the inherent power Lefebvre (1991) assigns to the state, this thesis illustrates how favela residents are constantly reconstructing the space of their communities. While this overwhelming power to define space is a logical conclusion of the state's role in physically building cities, it does not apply in favelas where the community is built by residents, not the state. In this, the thesis contributes to knowledge on informal communities by detailing the activist perspective on favelas: these are not slums inhabited by criminals but communities which have flourished despite neglect. Through physical and social (re)construction of the community, favela residents construct their space as welcoming, safe and friendly.

This stands in opposition to the meanings ascribed to the spaces of favelas by local authorities. Rio's municipal government attempted to hide favelas away during the Olympic Games, with walls blocking the view of some favelas from major highways. Vila Autódromo's eviction fits this policy also: the favela is now gone, replaced by twenty identical houses that could easily be a gated community. By understanding favelas differently, focusing on their merits as residents do, policy makers would reject slum clearance for favelas on the simple basis that favelas are not slums. This recognition of informal communities as a legitimate form of urban housing is gaining traction as an emerging policy internationally, yet Rio's favelas still have to fight to exist. Describing one favela's struggle to remain, this thesis contributes to debates around Brazilian citizenship and the relationship between those who reside in the asphalt and *favelados*. This is crucial given the newly installed, undemocratic, elitist and regressive government in Brazil.

By understanding space as produced by, not just co-opted by, social movements, I have argued that social movements are able to engender a sense of place in the Vila Autódromo favela. Unlike space, this sense of place is not physical but imagined, drawn from how the space has been constructed as an extrapolated ideal of what the favela could be. This sense of place is not tied to the physical space and can be spread across scales around the world, through both social and mass media.

Finally, this thesis makes significant contributions to debates around media coverage of social movements through its close attention to the complex relationships between activists and journalists. Significant attention has been given to how movements are portrayed in press reporting, with media portrayal widely accepted to be crucial in the success of social movements, with foreign correspondents writing 'the first draft of history' about protests in Rio. However, relatively little research focuses on how activists work with journalists to gain sympathetic press coverage, a deficit this thesis begins to address.

Recommendations for future research

Many of the discussions in this thesis are ongoing, with further research crucial to understand the political dynamics of urban space and how it is (re)constructed over time. There are several important questions this thesis raises which require further investigation. To pick up on the conclusion of the final chapter, there needs to be detailed ethnographic engagement with issues of rights in Brazil as the country undergoes far-reaching political upheaval. Marginalised populations, like those living in Rio's favelas, are likely to bear the brunt of the cuts to social programs and the stripping of rights. As Rio moves on from hosting mega-events, away from global scrutiny, the relationship between favelas and the state is likely to continue to change.

As such, researchers should continue to focus on Rio's informal city and the challenges favelas present to dominant conceptions of urban space. Such work should hold Olympic organisers to account on their promises of delivering a lasting

legacy for the city, particularly for the urban poor living in favelas. These communities are constantly presenting different approaches to deal with a smorgasbord of issues, from environmental sustainability to race relations, from housing rights to culture and tourism. More research on these topics should seek to promote these alternative understandings of the world which, to hugely simplify them, place limited value on material gains. Such research has the potential to contribute to debates around adapting to climate change and dealing with housing crises, not just in the Global South, but in cities all over the world.

Deep, ethnographic engagement with the issues facing marginalised groups in Rio de Janeiro and across the continent of Latin America hold important lessons about development and political ideas around the world, particularly given the present populist turn across global politics. Alongside this, more research is required focussing on aspects of life in the formal city to push back against the fetishisation of the favela as representative of Brazil in academic research. In particular, I believe the relationship between the Brazilian middle classes and Western cultural forms holds some interesting insights into the legacy of colonialism in the 21st Century. This builds on the reflections I offer around being a gringo in Brazil in the epilogue.

As the IOC reforms, academics should continue to research issues which are claimed to be violations of human rights to monitor the efficacy of these policy modifications. The evidence from Rio suggests the IOC's limited reforms do not provide sufficient protection for marginalised residents of Olympic host cities. That said, many of the reforms were not announced when Rio won the right to host the Games, and the human rights clause will not officially come into effect until the 2024 Summer Games. More research is needed in future host cities to track the changes these reforms bring about. Alongside this, scholars should focus on the role social movements have in pressuring international sporting bodies into introducing reforms to ensure the protection of human rights. In particular, researchers should focus on the relationship grassroots activists like residents of Vila Autódromo and the Comitê Popular have with international human rights NGO's such as Terre Des Hommes and Amnesty International.

Alongside this, scholars of social movements should continue to engage with spatial theories to further our understanding of protest. In this case, understanding the space and place of protest helped to clarify the aims and methods of the movement and, in particular, the ramifications this episode of contention has beyond the specific case study presented here. These conceptual tools should be considered in much more research on social movements, not only on issues where contention is explicitly about specific locations. Where protest happens, why it happens where it does and what changes in those spaces and places matters when trying to understand contentious politics. Scholars need to engage with these questions when writing about social movements.

A happy ending?

This thesis makes several contributions to debates in various academic fields, which I have outlined above. However, this research is not intended to sit on a dusty shelf in an ivory tower and also makes important and timely contributions to ongoing public debates. Specifically, this relates to public debates on state policies in informal communities and violations of human rights in Olympic host cities. I shall address some of the lessons from this thesis for these two issues in turn.

Rio's favelas are not suddenly treated more respectfully by the municipal government now that the IOC have left town. Indeed, the removal of international press scrutiny means they are potentially subject to greater violence than that discussed in this thesis. Informal communities are not perfect, there are myriad problems in Rio's favelas, and in similar communities around the world. Yet these communities exist because housing is unaffordable and unavailable for large sections of the population of major cities. Any solution must respect these people, not pushing them further towards the periphery through evictions and violence, but by tackling the issues which exist in informal communities by working with residents. This can be difficult, but the Popular Plan for Vila Autódromo provides a workable roadmap for delivering upgrades to favelas while placing the needs and

desires of communities at the heart of the planning process. This kind of participatory policy planning will address the issues associated with informal communities. Evictions only sweep the problems under the carpet.

The IOC is currently undergoing a process of reform. The widely touted Agenda 2020 reforms seek to change the Games in several important ways. As Boykoff (2016) states, they do not go far enough. The Games is, the evidence clearly shows, causing harm to significant numbers in host cities by nature of the rapid and far-reaching urban transformations they encourage. The IOC needs to act to stop this by reducing the size and impact of the Games in some way. As the notion that the Olympics help redevelop cities has become indefensible, coupled with the fact that the majority of sports fans engage with the Olympics in a mediated form, it seems to me there is little reason to continue to have a single host city where construction projects are concentrated.

More specifically, this thesis speaks to the issue of human rights abuses. As noted above, the IOC recently committed to introducing a human rights clause in the Host City Contract, something the Sports Rights Alliance, a coalition of major international NGO's, has long called for (Etchells 2017). This is a step in the right direction, but requires significant scaffolding to truly help those on the ground. The questions regarding who has the ability to define rights and violations of rights raised in chapter 7 remain pertinent. For this clause to have any real meaning, this power to define rights must be taken outside of interested parties, in particular it must be removed from the influence of both the IOC and host governments. It is therefore difficult to see how this can realistically be enforced. In reality, the human rights clause appears is unlikely to have any utility in stopping violations of human rights, only being useful as a discursive stick for activists to beat the IOC. Even in this limited function, history suggests it is unlikely this clause will ever compel the IOC to act.

And so, to conclude. This is a difficult task, to frame my last words on Vila Autódromo and their campaign against evictions. In a sense, I have two conclusions

in my head, two ways of looking forward from the events in Vila Autódromo, one optimistic, the other pessimistic. In myself, I am unable to decide on which deserves to be the final word, so I shall outline both and allow you, the reader, to make up your own mind. Let's start with the pessimistic vision.

Vila Autódromo's success in fighting eviction stands out as a true David and Goliath story, the tiny favela which took on the Olympics and won. But is this really accurate? The community was reduced from six hundred families to just twenty. I say community deliberately in this case because Vila Autódromo today lacks several fundamental features of a favela: it is not self-built (with the exception of the church) and the neighbourhood was professionally planned. The whitewashed homes are exactly that: whitewashed of any trace of the uniqueness and personality that characterise favela buildings. The favela no longer exists. When those twenty families were granted the right to remain, other residents who had been forcibly removed and had planned to rebuild their homes were not allowed to return to the community.

Even if we count twenty families remaining in the favela as a success, it was won through sheer grit in the face of severe violations of human rights. While residents were removed legally, as compensation (either financial or in the form of alternative housing) was offered, many argue that the broader treatment of residents constitutes abuse of human rights (see Comitê Popular 2015: 38-39). Negotiations over this compensation was conducted in an atmosphere of coercion and "psychological terrorism", with residents told "if you don't leave with love you'll leave in pain" by city officials, suggesting that if they refused to negotiate they would get nothing. Residents were often given no warning when their homes were demolished, waking up in the morning to find Municipal Guards outside their home with demolition papers. In some cases, they were not even home: one woman's home was demolished as she was at a medical appointment, not aware her home was under threat. Residents' desires and plans for their community were completely disregarded as they were excluded from the planning process (until the

municipal government revealed their plans publicly and residents were able to gain some minor alterations).

Yet despite all this, Vila Autódromo was one of the lucky ones. More evictions occurred under Eduardo Paes than under any other Mayor in Rio's history, including the years of military dictatorship (Faulhaber and Azevedo 2015). Across Rio, over 22,000 families were evicted from favelas between Rio winning the right to host the Games and 2015 (Comitê Popular 2015: 36). Over 4,000 of these were directly related to mega-events, with many evicted to make room for transport legacy projects. The Comitê Popular (2015) argue that the remaining evictions were indirectly linked to mega-events, linked to a climate of real estate speculation encouraged by hosting the World Cup and Olympic Games. In many of these cases, compensation was well below the market value of properties, forcing residents further from Rio's economic centre and urban resources. Some even report that evicted residents died as a result of health problems brought on by evictions (Penha Macena 2017).

As Magalhães (2013) argues, this is a worrying trend. In the decades since redemocratisation, favelas have not faced major threats of eviction (Perlman 2010), yet the Olympics seems to have inspired a return to policies not seen since the military dictatorship. It remains unclear whether this new architecture of removals will continue as the Olympic circus leaves town. This sits in a wider context of renewed state violence in favelas in Rio's mega-event years, with the pacification programme blamed for thousands of deaths in favelas (Amnesty International 2016). This policy, as Robb Larkins (2015: 139) points out, represents the "same old variety of oppressive state action in the favela", doing little to actually ensure security for many residents.

This degradation of human rights sits in a worrying national context. During the Paralympic Games, the Brazilian senate removed Dilma Rousseff from office, replacing her with Michel Temer. Many on the left describe this as a coup supported by Brazil's overwhelming right-wing press, with significant justification

(see Van Dijk 2017). Temer's government has implemented hugely unpopular reforms, stripping rights from worker's and paring back many of the Worker's party reforms which, as discussed in chapter 7, provided some legal basis for the right to housing. With the question posed by Magalhães (2013) regarding the return of favela removal policies and whether such policies will continue post-Games, politics at the federal level provide little cause for optimism.

Perhaps the most depressing point is that it was all for nothing. The evictions, which residents perceptively blamed on real estate speculation, created space for new buildings. According to the upgrading plan residents agreed with the municipal government, there should be community amenities including schools and a community centre built (see Figure 7.6). According to the planned timetable, these should have been completed in the months following the Games, but with international attention scarpering from Rio after the Olympic Games, residents' ability to pressure the government is significantly diminished. This still left considerable space around the community vacant, with residents presuming condominiums would be constructed: apparently confirmed by a report in the *O Globo* newspaper after the Games showing plans to build multiple apartment blocks on the Olympic site (Magalhães 2016). Yet, at the time of writing, nothing has been built, or even started (see Figure 8.1). The homes were destroyed for private profit, yet no profit has even been made. The evictions were utterly pointless, as many predicted at the time.

Image removed for copyright purposes.

Figure 8.1: Wasteland where the homes of Vila Autódromo once stood. January 2017. Photo by Clare Richardson.

So, the twenty families who still live in Vila Autódromo represent a tiny light of success in a sea of darkness for housing rights activists and favela advocates. The outlook appears to be darkening as Rio copes with an Olympic legacy of debt and economic and political crises across the country. How then, could I possibly paint this in a positive light? Surely to do so would be grasping at straws at best? Perhaps, but there are reasons to be optimistic despite this gloomy outlook. The tiny light of success that Vila Autódromo represents threatens to grow stronger for a variety of reasons. Perhaps most importantly, Rio is no longer preparing to host the Olympic Games. There is no strong justification for evictions, especially as real estate development is no longer booming in the city. With limited money due to the Olympic debt and economic crisis, it seems unlikely that Rio's government will seek to transform the urban landscape so dramatically again in the near future.

In a variety of ways, Vila Autódromo residents were better placed than most to resist evictions. The favela had strong, clearly established legal rights from previous struggles against eviction, unlike many other favelas. These previous struggles also

left a legacy of organization: residents in Vila Autódromo knew what they were doing and were well organised. The quality of life in the favela, with no history of violence and good access to local amenities, made residents more determined to fight against eviction. Further, it was directly next to the Olympic park, with the municipal government unable to deny the eviction was linked to the mega-event and thus making it a point of interest to international journalists. Because of all this, the community garnered significant support from other sectors of Rio's civil society; I have particularly highlighted RioOnWatch and the Comitê Popular in this thesis, but there were many other groups involved in various ways as well.

Against this was an array of powerful interests, first and foremost the Olympic Games organisers, who sought the removal of the favela to remove a potential blight from the perfect image they would project through the Games. Backed by the IOC and their who's who of corporate royalty as sponsors, the state had no shortage of reasons to remove the favela. Carlos Carvalho, Brazil's twelfth richest man and a generous donor to Eduardo Paes' political career, coveted the land for real estate development. Paes himself had a personal history with the favela which had resisted his previous attempts at eviction in the 1990's. Construction companies, which as the unfolding *Lava Jato* corruption scandal is showing, held the ear of a great number of Brazilian politicians and had an interest in the removal of the community. In this context, Vila Autódromo's struggle for permanence became about much more than one favela: it became a struggle of the people against the powerful for who decides on the future of Brazil. In this, the inability of the state to fully evict the community appears as a failure, with the campaign to stay appearing to be a great victory for social movements. Essentially, as summed up by an editor at RioOnWatch in February, when the fate of the community remained unclear: "if they can't remove them for the Olympics they never will".

The success of those twenty families sets some important precedents, as discussed in chapter 7. The upgrading agreement reached between residents and the municipal government is the first deal of its kind in history. Previously, and throughout process of removals in Vila Autódromo, the state has insisted on

negotiating with individual families, refusing to recognise collective bargaining rights. These individual negotiations often means residents are unaware what neighbours are offered and make their decisions without important information. This agreement marks a break with that, which other favelas facing eviction will be able to point to when they argue that the government should be negotiating with them collectively. Further, as I argue in chapter 7, the modifications residents were able to make to the municipal government's plan, albeit small, represent a de facto recognition of favela residents' right to the city.

Vila Autódromo's success in resisting eviction provides some illustrative examples of what favelas can do to resist eviction. While, as I argue in chapter 5, the lightning rod for mobilisation and attention that the Olympic Games provided in Vila Autódromo means various tactics of resistance will be difficult to replicate, there are some aspects which could be used by others. Primary among these is the Popular Plan, which provided irrefutable evidence for residents' claim that they didn't need to leave, that "permanence is possible" (AMPVA 2016: 16). Other favelas have explored the possibility of creating a Popular Plan in a similar mould not only to resist evictions, but also to exert pressure on the municipal government to support ongoing development. Alongside the Popular Plan, the community's contestation of space in the favela to undermine the justification for eviction, as discussed in this thesis, can be replicated by others. That said, the spreading of place across scales, as discussed in chapter 5 and 6, will be more challenging without the political opportunity brought by the Olympic Games.

Finally, in Erika's words, "the fight goes on", even though Vila Autódromo have won their victory, "because other communities are still suffering". Vila Autódromo residents continue to be involved in promoting housing rights, with some speaking with human rights groups in Geneva and others participating in the UN Habitat III conference in Quito. While some allies, particularly those international groups which work on issues associated with mega-events, may have moved on, residents still retain some valuable allies in Rio's universities, left-wing political parties and civil society. Vila Autódromo's struggle, memorialized in the Museum of Removals,

continues to provide inspiration for favelas facing eviction and was recently exhibited in Brazil's National History Museum (Villalobos 2017).

So, having presented my two conclusions, I leave it for you to decide which you find more compelling. The complexities and ambiguities of the social world preclude us from a definitive conclusion. However, I will conclude with a final point on the campaign of resistance in Vila Autódromo to ensure clarity. Six hundred families were reduced to just twenty over the course of evictions, leading some to question, legitimately, whether the fact that twenty families remain really constitutes success. From my observations and conversations with people involved, it is a huge victory. Yes, the number of families living in the community was massively reduced by state violence. But it is a remarkable triumph that, thanks to a strong campaign of resistance, it was not cut to zero.

Epilogue: Reflections on Rio

Here, in this epilogue, I wish to offer some reflections on the process of this doctoral project, particularly around fieldwork and my own emotional and political involvement with the field. As discussed in the methodological chapter, everyday decisions taken throughout fieldwork – who to sit with, what questions to ask, what language to speak – impacted on this project in a number of diverse ways. I have outlined in the text where this impacts directly on issues I have discussed in this thesis, but this epilogue addresses some wider issues that impacted on the very subject of the thesis. As such, they do not fit easily within the body of the thesis and are presented here. These reflections are written in a deliberately raw style in an attempt to convey the experience in an authentic way instead of sanitising the language with intellectual theorising. This is another reason for this section to be slightly removed from the main body of the thesis.

In essence, this chapter provides reflections on three distinct issues. Unlike other chapters, the sections do not (all) build upon each other to make a specific argument. Rather, here I seek to provide the reader within insight into the process by which the thesis has been constructed for reasons detailed in the methodology chapter. To summarise, my decisions and actions have explicitly and implicitly shaped this thesis and as such accounting for these decisions is a fundamental part of sociological enquiry (Dean 2017). Here I seek to provide details of what Blackman (2007) calls hidden ethnography: discussing the impact of apparently controversial issues which too often are left out of published work but which are important in understanding the theoretical arguments. The first section (Leaving Vila Autódromo) discusses my emotional connection to the movement being studied and the problematic ethics of political research. The second section (Fear and Loathing in Rio de Janeiro) details my experience of being mugged and the impact it had on my relationship with the city. Finally, the third section (Being There, Being Gringo) provides a lengthy discussion of the issues I faced arising from being a foreigner in Brazil.

Leaving Vila Autódromo

The residents finally have the keys to their new homes, smiles across all their faces. It's been a tiring day, with the inspection of homes seemingly taking forever. I make to leave, needing to write a report of the day's events for RioOnWatch. Erika is talking to some journalists and catches me as I'm leaving, calling me over to say goodbye. She hugs me, her small wiry frame giving off her radiant warmth. I've always been amazed by her positivity in the face of evictions and I finally get up the courage to ask a question I've wanted to ask her for ages: now she has her new home, is she excited for the Olympics? Whenever she's been asked about the Games previously by journalists, she's refrained from criticising them directly, simply saying she doesn't want to have to leave her home. This seems to be another example of the power of nondecisions (see Bachrach and Baratz 1962) at play – residents and activists know the hosting of the Games is beyond question. But its always struck me as a façade, and I am seizing my chance to get behind her cheery, optimistic mask. A look of sadness returns to her face as she replies with honesty, saying "no, it has brought me a lot of sadness. It's not a mega-event for me. But I'm happy for this victory".

As a lump rises in my throat, she takes my hand and adds "it's yours too". Residents, as I have discussed in this thesis, always went out of the way to thank people who came to support their community and while I knew they were sincere, I never really felt it was aimed at me. Now Erika is thanking me personally, listing the ways I have helped her, from staying in her home the nights before it was demolished to publicising the favela's struggle internationally. In some ways, I never knew I mattered this much to the residents – I was doing my bit, but I didn't really expect it to be noticed among many others helping here. My writing didn't get the same attention for the favela as foreign correspondents and I wasn't as closely involved in supporting residents as others like Leticia. Hearing Erika list my contributions and thanking me brings home that it is over, so much more than watching people collect their keys had, and an overwhelming cocktail of emotions –

relief, pride, happiness, love and many more – washes over me. I am utterly overwhelmed with emotion, unable to articulate my feelings in my head, let alone out loud in Portuguese, stuttering out thanks and praise for Erika.

We hug again, embracing tightly. The journalists to whom Erika had been talking eagerly photograph our embrace. As I leave, she tells me to thank the others (at RioOnWatch) as well. Walking away, I am fighting back tears, but for once in this place where I have shed many a tear, they're tears of joy. All these residents have shown incredible strength and resilience, something I don't think I will ever truly be able to understand or emulate. Erika in particular is an inspiration to me: the emotional strength she showed when her home was demolished was genuinely unbelievable – just minutes after the home she'd built for twenty years and fought to save for almost as many had been destroyed, she was smiling and speaking to journalists. I am a little upset that I haven't been able to fully express how inspiring she and the other residents are to me.

What I am trying to convey with this passage of field notes is my emotional connection to Vila Autódromo. I am certain that I cannot fully convey my attachment to the favela in words; perhaps it is simplest just to say that I love that place[18]. The characters discussed in this thesis are not mere characters, they are people who mean a great deal to me. Of course, that could be said of many an ethnography, but it is necessary to mention this here as the attachment I feel towards residents has shaped the way I have written about them. I have written, in Becker's (1967) terms, from their side, a side I have taken based on my own commitment to social justice, equality and democracy. These values, in my judgement, were under threat in Vila Autódromo, as the Rio's poor were evicted from their homes to make room for expensive developments, with no real engagement from the municipal government with the community at large.

[18] I refer deliberately here to the *place* imagined and created through Occupy Vila Autódromo events. While I do hold a particular affinity to the space and the people who reside there, in many ways the physical space is unrecognisable now from the favela I first visisted in November 2015.

Informed by being on their side, I have presented 'residents' as a monolithic bloc, a group of individuals who think, feel and behave in the same way, which clearly was not the case. The much of my data is drawn from conversations with a select few residents who were heavily involved in resisting eviction, particularly Erika, Tobias and Amanda. Yet there were others who were less prominent in my fieldwork who took different views and behaved differently. When I was in Vila Autódromo watching the key handover for the new homes, there were residents proudly picking up keys who I barely recognised, many who were so busy with work that they were unable to devote time to political struggle. Some residents who were excluded from the final rehousing agreement felt that those who had negotiated the agreement had sold out, for example. Even here, I am unwilling even to go into details about this disagreement. Not only because the safety and wellbeing of those residents depends in some small part upon it, but because to write about this issue would feel like a betrayal of the trust residents have placed in me to portray their struggle. In this, I follow Scheper-Hughes' (2000: 128) reflection that anonymity makes us forget our duty to those in our research: to give "the same degree of courtesy, empathy and friendship in writing as we generally extend to them face to face in the field".

In part, I have not written about the fissures and complex power relations that existed within the community because I do not have enough detail, partly because it would have been insensitive to ask the necessary questions. I am aware of some fissures, particularly between those who got new homes and those who didn't. But realistically, I had no desire to explore the splits and fissures within the residents of Vila Autódromo. Their solidarity in sticking together was a crucial element of their struggle and for me to try to pick that apart in some way would be spitting in the face of the hospitality and friendship they had given me: it didn't seem important to me and it would completely contradict my role as a "supportive interlocutor" (Desai 2013: 106). The strains placed on communities under periods of pressure is not what interests me: I was focussed on the local grassroots response to global power, as expressed through the municipal government's planning of the Olympic Games. While this thesis is not political propaganda, exploring this strain in

published work would likely harm the community's ongoing attempts to secure further upgrades. For this reason, I have no interest (at this point) in writing about the fissures and power imbalances in the resistance movement.

This touches on the ethical tension that exists in much research on protest "between complete submersion in movement struggles, versus a mythical position of objective analytic detachment" (Johnston and Goodman 2006: 9). Throughout the thesis I have been careful not to explicitly present favelas as either zones of criminality and poverty or as spaces of safety and community, at least when talking about favelas in a generalised sense. In some regards, the relationship these contrasting narratives have to reality is irrelevant: what I am exploring is how activists organise and promote their own narrative. How favelas actually exist only becomes important to this, drawing on Bourdieu (1989), when the narratives are 'tested' against experience in a favela, as I discussed in chapter 6.

That is not to say, however, that my own political view is not implicitly woven into the entire work. The principle of "immediate reciprocation" (Gillan and Pickerill 2012: 136) clearly helped me to gain initial access to a variety of groups during fieldwork, including Vila Autódromo, RioOnWatch and others. I was an enthusiastic participant in the movement against Olympic evictions, attending numerous events and writing dozens of articles for RioOnWatch and other media outlets. However, the thesis itself is not intended as political propaganda and I do not claim to be supporting the movement through writing it. While I took an active role in the movement, this thesis is emphatically not a militant ethnography (see Apoifis 2017) designed specifically to help the movement. Instead it serves, as Desai (2013: 106) suggests, as a "supportive interlocutor", bringing the analytical tools of the sociologist to bear on the movement while recognising their limited utility as political action. In short, theoretical analysis is of limited practical use to the movement, whereas my presence at events and public writings through the course of fieldwork were far more politically valuable.

Fear and loathing in Rio de Janeiro

As discussed in chapter 3, the focus of this research became Vila Autódromo as a result of several events at the end of February and the beginning of March 2016. Having documented these events in fieldnotes, I felt I already had enough data to write a thesis on Vila Autódromo when I reviewed my notes in April and as a result, I stopped searching for new groups to work with and new sites to visit. There was, however, another reason for this shift to a more focussed approach, as opposed to the wide, exploratory approach I had begun with, an event which happened the weekend after Rio's annual carnival celebrations in early February.

As I walk towards Largo da Carioca in the downtown area to buy my girlfriend a Valentine's Day present, I spot a guy with dark brown skin who looks about 20 in a dirty red shirt who seems to be looking at me. He seems to be waiting at a pedestrian crossing, even as others cross the road as traffic is stopped. He looks poor and malnourished. I pass him and cross the road as the lights for pedestrians turn red, jogging slightly to get across before the waiting traffic starts up. There are three brown-skinned, poor looking kids standing by the fence on the left and a few people gathered at another crossing some 50 metres ahead – otherwise, I am alone. As I continue walking, I am suddenly aware that the guy in the red shirt is following me. He must have sprinted in front of moving traffic to get that close behind me.

Oh shit. I'm about to be mugged. Should I run?

I'm about level with the three kids on the left, but before I can make a decision, the scrawny guy in the red top comes alongside and grabs me by the neck. I feel his warm fingers close around my throat as he throws me into the fence on the left with surprising force. I look upwards and stammer out something like "calm, its ok", as two of the kids who'd been stood by the fence plunge their hands into the pockets of my shorts. I look upwards away from their faces, trying not to do anything that might antagonise them and put myself in danger. I later realise from a

cut on my chest that there is a knife held against my abdomen, but in this moment, I can feel nothing but the vice-like grip of fingers around my neck. I pray that they at least leave my keys so I can back into my apartment, where I still had a spare credit card and my expensive phone. The two kids who are going through my pockets have closed their hands on my phone and wallet, scarpering away around the corner, mercifully leaving my keys. As the other two leave, one of them looks me in the eyes with a disgusted expression, before ripping the sunglasses off my face and disappearing after his partners in crime. The whole thing can't have lasted more than about five seconds.

Helpless and confused, I wander towards Largo da Carioca as I try to figure out what to do. I'm only a few minutes walk away from my flat, but that's the same direction the thieves ran off in. Meandering along the street, I lock eyes with a woman on the street who had clearly seen what had happened, but had done nothing. What could she have done? It seems ludicrous that I was mugged in broad daylight, with people so nearby. I'm vaguely embarrassed by it. As I make my way home, I pass a police station – should I report the crime? No, it won't change anything.

Once home, I take stock of what has been stolen. My phone, which was fairly cheap as I was expecting something like this to happen at some point. My wallet had some R$200 (£50) in it, but that's not the end of the world. All told, I've probably lost less than £200, which doesn't seem too bad. There are also fieldwork photos on my phone which cannot be replaced. My mind is slowly turning to less material concerns. I feel as if I've lost a significant amount of dignity and pride. Moreover, I wonder whether I've lost my sense of security in the city – I knew something like this was going to happen at some point and I was prepared for the material losses. I was happily wandering the streets completely unafraid, carrying relatively little cash and a cheap mobile phone. I didn't, however, expect it to be so violent, so traumatic. Will I ever be able to feel as safe as I had on the streets again?

The answer, it seems, is no.

In the days after being mugged, I learnt something new about the city: downtown is dangerous. When I told friends about being mugged their immediate reaction (beyond kindness and sympathy) was to ask what I was doing there at that time. Downtown Rio, it seems, is only safe when people are there – outside of working hours, including weekends, it should be avoided. Over the weeks that followed, I struggled with major anxiety about being alone on the streets. Frequently I avoided attending events because I had nobody to go with. My girlfriend, bless her, was dragged all over the city as my chaperone when she wasn't working. Over the weeks and months that followed, I slowly rebuilt my confidence in the city, but very rarely went to new areas I didn't already know – I declined to go anti-Olympic protest events held in the Complexo do Alemão and Maré favelas. Even as I knew it would be safe, with other RioOnWatch volunteers happily attending, going to either of these two favelas – the most dangerous favelas in the city, by reputation – was well beyond my confidence. I also refused to attend a protest downtown marking two months to the beginning of the Games as I had no-one to go with me and I was afraid.

This is, at least in part, the reason this thesis focuses so squarely on a single favela. While I knew in my head that favelas were safe places, especially if visiting with people who live there, I couldn't bring myself to explore the city further beyond this mugging – at least without my Carioca girlfriend as a chaperone. Importantly, this was not limited to favelas. To my anxious mind, these favelas were just another part of a city I didn't know, a city I was afraid of. Sticking to the areas I already knew, I focused my attentions on Vila Autódromo where I felt confident in my security.

The keen reader will spot an irony here. Having written a thesis about favelas being safe, secure places, I'm now admitting that I myself was too afraid to venture into these areas for a significant chunk of my fieldwork. This is not contradictory for two key reasons. Firstly, I have not claimed at any point that all favelas are safe and secure, making this claim only about Vila Autódromo. The informal nature of

favelas means that they all develop in very different ways and some of these places do have severe issues with violence, including both the military police and drug trafficking gangs. I have not claimed these favelas are safe: rather, what I have argued is that danger is not a defining feature of a favela – just because a neighbourhood is a favela does not automatically make it unsafe.

Secondly, my fear of going to favelas like Complexo do Alemão and Maré was not related to the fact that they are favelas, but instead was derived from the reputation those areas have as dangerous. I was equally, if not more, afraid of going downtown (outside of working hours), another area with a reputation for being dangerous. I was also nervous when spending time in tourist hotspots like Ipanema and Copacabana, conscious that my whiteness marked me out as a target for petty crime, as I discuss in the following section. I was not afraid of going to favelas, rather I was afraid of going to places I didn't know, particularly those places which had a reputation for being dangerous.

Being there, being gringo

Gringo is a peculiar word in Brazilian Portuguese[19]. Pinning down a clear definition is hard: the word is used liberally to refer to foreigners, but for some Brazilians, some foreigners aren't gringos. Other Latin Americans are often not considered gringos, whereas USAmericans almost exclusively are. Europeans, particularly the English, are broadly considered gringos, whereas Africans often aren't. One Carioca I discussed the issue with joked that Paulistas[20] were gringos and, particularly towards the end of my time in Rio, some people told me I was becoming less gringo. Taking all this together, gringo is clearly not just where a person is from, it is also bound up with racial and ethnic identities as well as signifying a broader, more changeable condition which includes behaviour and how people relate to others.

[19] The term is used across Latin America: I am talking here about the specific way in which it was used during my fieldwork in Rio de Janeiro
[20] Natives of São Paulo

In a sense, to be gringo is best defined as the opposite of being Brazilian. In this, Brazilian friends would make jokes when I behaved differently to Brazilian cultural standards. Most often, this was because I was too 'formal' and uptight, arriving early for events or having an apparently unusual desire for personal space. I was being very gringo in these moments. That is not to say gringo is defined as loose and informal; these were merely the aspects of Brazilian culture I struggled with most frequently. These jokes worked both ways; when arranging to meet with gringo friends we often said we would meet on "Gringo Standard Time", meaning we would actually meet at the time we agreed. Gringo-ness, in this sense, is a fundamentally non-Brazilian character trait: being gringo is the diametric opposite of being Brazilian. Of course, this definition comes with the enormous caveat that Brazilian-ness itself is not a settled object, yet to get into this discussion in more detail would be a entire separate thesis, if not a life's work.

The focus on white USAmericans and Europeans, particularly English-speakers, puts a clear tinge of colonial relations to the term, with gringo a modern-day term for the citizens of imperialist nations of old. Folk etymologies of the term frequently refer to US soldiers invading parts of Latin America, with their green uniforms often suggested to be the root of the word. As a white Brit, I was clearly gringo. While some Brazilians hold to Gilberto Freyre's (2003 [1933]) well-known description of Brazil as a racial democracy, where race is not an issue as anyone can be Brazilian, there are major issues related to race and racism across Brazilian society (see Scheper-Hughes 1992; Goldstein 2003; Silva 2016). Gringos are just a small part of the complex mix of ethnic and racial identities in Brazil, yet it is perhaps revealing that this condition which, if it means anything clear, refers to non-Brazilian-ness: to be white, rich or powerful in Brazil is treated as a marker of difference, albeit privileged difference, the implication being that Brazilians are poor and marginalised.

This privileged difference is one which struck me repeatedly during fieldwork. It coloured my perceptions of safety throughout my time in Brazil – I never imagined being a victim of anything worse than the mugging described above. Indeed, my

ethical approval documentation noted that I was unlikely to be a victim of police violence in favelas due to my gringo-ness. I was conscious, from my first days in Brazil, that I was treated differently because of the colour of my skin, from being a target for criminals due to my presumed wealth to suddenly being attractive to the opposite sex due to the cultural status of the English language. In a sense, this was an interesting change of pace: I was able to appreciate, for the first time in my life, what it is like to be treated differently based on my own skin colour[21]. At times, such as when riot police charged protesters at an anti-Olympic march I was able to calmly remove myself from the fray, my whiteness keeping me safe from harm, whereas at other moments, such as the mugging case described above, it marked me out as a target. In certain situations, as I discussed in chapter 3, it meant I was welcomed into groups, like RioOnWatch, whereas in different contexts such as the Comitê Popular (I perceived that) it made my inclusion more difficult.

As mentioned above, another key marker of a gringo is an English speaker. Had I analysed the corpus of my fieldnotes by simply picking out the most common phrases, the major theme throughout the notes would be something along the lines of "fuck, I can't understand this language". This, or some variation of it (although always with the infuriated swearing), appears scattered frequently across the pages of my notes, in the margins, in the body of the text, as a footnote and as a main subject. I struggled throughout fieldwork with learning Portuguese, constantly feeling I was missing important scraps of information due to my lack of fluency in the language. Even among the gringos of RioOnWatch I often felt inferior, that everyone else spoke Portuguese better than I, embarrassed by my relative inability to communicate, despite lessons in the language. Being uptight held me back even further from interactions, often being too afraid of looking stupid to risk involving myself in complex discussions. That said, when I look back over my notes, it becomes clear that while the frustration was almost everpresent, my comprehension improved dramatically over time. While in the opening month or

[21] I am of course aware that I am treated differently due my skin colour all around the world, but being different from the cultural norm was a new experience for me. This, of course, is white privilege in action

two I was missing information, for much of fieldwork these comments were directed at the effort it took me to comprehend, not a lack of comprehension. At the end of fieldwork it was the odd word I didn't know here and there; I was no longer failing to understand what people were saying to me as I had in my first few days in Brazil.

Language learning, despite being a fundamental part doing ethnographic research, has long been neglected in social science (Gibb and Danero Iglesias 2017). While the problematic nature of translation has been discussed (see Tedlock 1983; Bahadir 2010), the difficulty of learning language is too often ignored, likely due to fears of undermining the credibility of the data. Learning is a complex process, a daily struggle to simply understand what people were saying to me in their field. While my comprehension improved dramatically over time, even at the end of fieldwork I struggled to understand certain vocabulary from time to time. Following discussions is particularly challenging with group debates (see Gibb and Danero Iglesias 2017) such as the meetings of the Comitê Popular, where people regularly speak over each other and there are few breaks in the dialogue that would allow me to catch up. Particularly in the opening weeks of fieldwork, these meetings were hugely tiring: another factor which contributed to my withdrawal from the weekly Comitê meetings.

Nevertheless, learning the language in the field can reveal new avenues for understanding the field. In my daily struggle to understand Portuguese, I noticed early on that I was able to understand residents of Vila Autódromo, particularly Tobias, Erika and Amanda, more easily than other Cariocas. Whether a conscious decision as part of a wider strategy of making non-Portuguese speakers welcome in the favela or an unconscious behaviour stemming from regular interaction with international guests, these unofficial spokespeople of the favela spoke more clearly and slowly than many others I met in the field. The realisation that I was conversing fluently during my first trip to the favela, as described in the introduction, was the first step along a path of exploring the subtle acts residents of Vila Autódromo engaged in to make visitors feel welcome. From this observation, noticed through

the process of language learning, came a rich vein of data about the welcoming nature of the community, which forms a central plank of this thesis.

Being there is a fundamental part of conducting ethnography (Borneman and Hammoudi 2009). The value of ethnography, when compared to other qualitative or quantitative methodologies, is that it allows us, as researchers, to get as close to the messy realities of the social world as possible. But being marked out as different by being gringo and equipped (initially at least) with only a limited grasp of Portuguese, how could I possibly fully understand the lifeworld's of those in my research? While many of these people became my friends, our relationships were always, particularly with residents of Vila Autódromo, coloured by power diferentials – I was choosing to be part of this struggle, they had no such choice. Following Robb Larkins (2015: 164), I reconciled this difference with a commitment to work for change on behalf of those residents who had welcomed me into their lives, not only writing for my own career advancement, but as part of a broader project of challenging and disrupting inequality.

The problems that stemmed from my being gringo were something I reflected on a great deal before, during and after fieldwork. It is the reason RioOnWatch features heavily in this thesis: I wasn't different there, I felt welcomed as an important member of the team, as I will discuss shortly. This was exacerbated by my desire to do original research: the Olympic Games attracts a great deal of interest including from academics and many others were conducting research as I did my fieldwork. I felt somewhat uncomfortable doing research similar to that being conducted by Brazilian researchers, many of whom were involved with the Comitê Popular, either as researchers or as activists. During fieldwork, I never really found a satisfying justification for why my research was needed when Brazilians were working on similar projects. Western researchers I encountered undertaking major research projects in Rio also worked closely with the Comitê, helped by their existing reputation and contacts as established academics. With numerous Brazilians working on projects related to the Comitê Popular as well as well-connected

Westerners, I felt unable to make a significant contribution to knowledge by writing about this group.

Conversely, there were no researchers actively studying RioOnWatch on the ground, although many members were undertaking research in other areas. RioOnWatch's team is mostly formed of gringos in their twenties, including students studying abroad and graduates with an interest in Brazil or urban issues. Here, being a young, gringo researcher ensured I was able to fit in and build strong relationships with the group. In this context, I decided that it would make for a more effective, original research project to focus my attention on RioOnWatch (along with Vila Autódromo) rather than the Comitê Popular. As such, being a gringo led me to focus my fieldwork more closely on RioOnWatch than the Comitê Popular.

I got along very well with members of RioOnWatch, taking on the important role of 'beerleader': corralling everyone to the nearby bar after the meetings finished. This served two important functions throughout fieldwork. Firstly, the bar provided a forum for conversation and discussion about RioOnWatch uninhibited by the formal structure of the weekly meeting. This allowed me to more freely discuss issues that had come up in the meeting, delving into more detail on the events of the previous week or discussing disagreements and conflicts that were left unsaid in the meeting. As a space for understanding RioOnWatch, particularly those who volunteered with the organisation, the bar was second to none.

Secondly, the bar allowed me a relative escape from Brazil. Here I could chat in English about the Premier League, Donald Trump and Brexit, unencumbered by my poor grasp of Portuguese or standing out as a target for crime (the bar in question being something of a tourist hotspot). This was a vital relief from the constant awareness of fieldwork, where I was always switched on and paying attention either for important snippets of information to help form my thesis or to avoid falling victim of crime, particularly after I had been mugged. These evenings at the bar were one of the highlights of my fieldwork, with many hours spent drinking and

chatting with a good group of friends. This was a world away from how I felt with members of the Comitê, who were always 'participants' in my research, never (albeit with one or two notable exceptions) friends. As such, being gringo inexorably led me to write this thesis, at least in part, about RioOnWatch.

My comfort with RioOnWatch was problematic, particularly towards the end of the fieldwork period. With my Portuguese vastly improved, I could have branched out and worked with a range of other groups, either building further on my existing links with members of the Comitê or developing connections with new groups that had begun to articulate their concerns about the Olympics in the months leading up to the opening ceremony. As well as this, RioOnWatch's weekly meetings proved a useful forum for keeping up to speed with events across the city, with volunteers reporting on different issues in different favelas around the city. This secondary data was detailed and easily accessible to me, allowing me to dip into issues of interest to me, such as protests over education cuts and police violence. However, my reticence to leave RioOnWatch was also influenced by my newfound anxiety in the city after being mugged (see the previous section).

Finally, I must admit that I am deeply uncomfortable writing critically about Brazil. I find myself constantly torn between a desire to excoriate those in government for their many failings and a concern about being the superior Westerner, a white saviour in action, pointing out everything wrong with the third world. I am always wary of writing too critically of Brazil and Rio de Janeiro, of failing to acknowledge to colonial and neo-colonial relations which are fundamental to understanding present day politics, but all too often left unsaid, in the background. To counter this, I often outline my thinking with Brazilians before writing, discussing my ideas and asking for their opinions, particularly for historical context. These discussions are part of building a critical consciousness (see Freire 1998), a clear understanding of the world, which Straubhaar (2015) argues is crucial to overcoming white saviour syndrome.

Understanding that favelas developed outside of the state and were neglected or mistreated by government for over a century is crucial to understanding the events in Vila Autódromo. Favelas, in many respects, exist because those with influence in Brazil have for centuries prioritised favourable trading and economic relationships with the USA and Europe over providing adequate housing for the Brazilian poor. This is why the history of Brazil and favelas appears in the introduction to this thesis: to foreground the historic roots of mistreatment of the Brazilian poor and the global power structures which produce such ill-treatment. Alongside this, the racial and gender descriptions of individual's throughout the thesis serve to reinforce that all too often, the power relations can be characterised (broadly speaking) as white men oppressing brown women. This is also why I have returned to this point here, at the end of the thesis, to ensure this point serves to bookend the contents of this work, situating it within this broader picture.

I do not think I will ever reach a point where I feel comfortable critiquing Brazil and Rio as an outsider. But that is no bad thing. The discomfort I feel pushes me to investigate further, to consider other interpretations and to situate my assertions within the proper context. To me, there are two Rio de Janeiro's. One is a mismanaged mess, where only those with money and influence have any real hope at a happy and peaceful life. This thesis describes this mismanagement in full swing during the build up to the Olympic Games, suppressing opportunity and hoarding any benefits of the mega-events to the already wealthy. The other Rio, however, is one in which anyone can have a peaceful and happy life, can make their own way, can get by, through creative adaption with a close-knit group of friends. A city where you might be down and out, but with nothing more than a cold beer, *churrasco* and good company, the world becomes your oyster. This, to me, is the true *cidade maravilhosa*.

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