Vila Autódromo in Rio de Janeiro: an unending struggle for recognition and citizen rights

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Declaration

I, Aimê Lima Olaussen, declare that this thesis is a result of my research investigations and findings. Sources of information other than my own have been acknowledged and a reference list has been appended. This work has not been previously submitted to any other university for award of any type of academic degree.

Ås, September 15th 2011

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Abstract

Vila Autódromo is one of the many favelas in Rio de Janeiro threaten by removal by due to the *2016 Olympic Games* happening in Rio Janeiro. The community has fought with the government of Rio de Janeiro's city against eviction since 1993, however their battle has intensified greatly during the past two years since the area occupied by Vila Autódromo will neighbor the Olympic Park and the Olympic Village. These structures will be partially financed by the private real estate capital and will be sold as private properties after the games in a highly valued piece of land. The community, however, has not been intimidated by the pressures exerted by the City Hall's current administration and the private capital and has equally intensified their resistance. Organized into a residents' association that represents the community before the public organs, their strategies are divided into main fields: working for the juridical part of their case and developing a network that includes partners and collaborators.

This thesis proposes to present a full report of their case as the actors involved in it. It also provides an historical and geographic background that works to contextualize Vila Autódromo and their struggle into the broader context of socio-economic inequalities in Brazil and the fight of favelas' communities for citizen rights. Drawing on two months of fieldwork in Rio de Janeiro I have collected the data necessary to the report of their case, and in addition, I sought to gain their perspective of the situation which, would be ultimately, used to guide my analysis. Because I wished to analyze the case from the association's point of view, it was essential to apply a research design and methodology that provided the necessary flexibility for changes along the process. I have chosen therefore, to develop this research within the frames of a case study.

Their case provides us with valuable insights into how the strong social stratification of Rio takes place on the local sphere and to observe the relationships that concretize these differences into a spatial stratification. Vila Autódromo stands out as a symbolic case to social movement groups that defend the expansion of civil rights in Rio because it provides these groups with a clear-cut case of social discrimination and spatial stratification carried out both by State agents and real estate capital. Finally, it might also contribute to our understanding of how communities living in a deeply unequal society can successfully mobilize to fight for equal rights and to break with the kind of social and political mechanisms that work to perpetuate conditions of exclusion and inequality in Rio de Janeiro and in Brazil.

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List of Acronyms

AMPVA – Association of Residents and Fishermen of Vila Autódromo (Associação de Moradores e Pescadores da Vila Autódromo)

CBA – Brazilian Confederation of Motorsport

GDP – Gross Domestic Product

IBGE – The Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics

IDB – Inter-American Development Bank

IPP – Pereira Passos Institute

ITERJ - Institute for Land and Cartography of the state of Rio de Janeiro

IMF – Monetary International Fund

NSD - Norwegian Social Science Data Services

PPP – Public-private partnership

PT - Partido Trabalhista (the Labour party)

SEAF - State Department of Land Affairs

SERLA - State Superintendence of Rivers and Lakes (Rio de Janeiro)

SMH – Municipal Housing Office

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1. Introduction

Vila Autódromo is a fairly small favela when compared to most of Rio de Janeiro's favelas. Counting around 1000 dwellers, the community has fought with the government of Rio de Janeiro's city against eviction since 1993. During the last two years their battle intensified greatly due to the *2016 Olympic Games* happening in Rio. The area occupied by the Vila Autódromo will be neighbor to the Olympic Park and the Olympic Village, both to be sold as private properties after the games in a highly valued piece of land. The community, however, has not been intimidated by the pressures exerted by the City Hall's current administration and the private capital and has equally intensified their resistance. Their case provides us with valuable insights into how the strong social stratification of Rio takes place and the relationships that concretize these differences into spatial stratification.

1.1 Why I chose Vila Autódromo

Growing up in Rio de Janeiro, I was aware of social class distinctions since a very early age. I think most children in Rio are, because it is unrealistic to ignore it in a town where poverty and prosperity live so close to each other. These encounters are happening consistently in the everyday life of most *cariocas*[1] and they are also visually displayed in the landscape of the town. Favelas and expansive modern buildings coexist within a few meters from each other and so does the people living in this parted town. It was only when I started this research that struck me the idea that maybe I also had an advantage in the perspective of social classes. My parents came from families with very different social backgrounds and I believe that relating to different social groups gave me the opportunity to reflect over these encounters while growing up. Eventually, these reflections nurture in me an especial interest in understanding how people from different classes relate to each other. This is probably the reason why I chose to take the course of Social Geography in the University of Rio de Janeiro and started the academic journey that brought me to this masters research.

During my bachelor studies, my understanding of social inequality was expanded while I learned about the political and socio-economic processes in Brazilian history that had shaped our society. By then, I became especially interested in the favelas, most likely because

[1] *Carioca* is a native inhabitant of the city of Rio de Janeiro. The word comes *Tupi*, the language of one of the native indigenous people who inhabited Brazil and it means: white man's house.

they are such a powerful visual statement of social stratification in Brazil. I was also baffled, like most cariocas, by the waves of violence occurring in town and the power of drug traffic networks nested in Rio's favelas. One day, while attending a lecture in the University, gunfire between two drug factions broke in the neighbor favela and bullets were flying so close to the classroom's windows that we all had to throw ourselves to the floor. I couldn't avoid thinking how ironic the whole situation felt like; we were part of a group of very few privileged youngsters (the ones that make into University) learning about the "excluded" citizens of our society when the violence happening "outside", in the favelas, reached into our classroom.

It is general knowledge that drug traffic networks have increasingly taken control of favelas since the 1970´s decade. The residents of many of these communities have been submitted to the rules imposed by traffic dealers and are often caught in the middle of gunfire. As a consequence, hundreds of innocent favela dwellers are killed every year or lived in fear. Still, no serious measures were taken by the public administrations to fight it unless the violence comes out of the favelas into the formal neighborhoods. When the time to choose my research topic came, I was sure I would like to research about favelas but I still didn't know exactly what. I understood that, as Caldeira and Holston support, the contemporary violence is the result of a deeply unequal society in "which the expansion of some rights occurred simultaneously with the abandonment of modern ideas of development and progress by many Brazilians of all classes, undermining the sense of a common project for the future" (1999:715).

These reflections became even stronger when I moved to Norway in 2008 and came in contact with another kind of social mindset, very different from that of my birthplace. As follows, I chose the Master Program in International Development Studies, which opened the opportunity for me to do this research and provided me with different perspectives from my own academic background in Brazil (which entailed a fairly Marxist political tendency). The context was, of course, international, and as we analyzed the conditions of inequality between "developed and developing countries" I couldn't stop thinking that though macro-structures such as national policies and international relations play an immeasurable role, the partition between "developed and developing societies" was inside of countries like my own. In a way, I felt like Brazil was a familiar representation of the world's inequality. If analyzed from a Macro-economic point of view, Brazil is the 8th most powerful economy in the world, in spite of this, economic and social inequality are so strenuous that only a very small portion of Brazilian society can recognize these numbers.

Later on, while taking one semester at Bergen University, I was accepted as a guest student for the master's program in Anthropology of Development. In this course, theories about poverty and inequality were tackled through a new prism, not necessarily conflictive, but in my point of view, complementary to the field of development studies. There is no doubt that to understand relations of inequality both global and local, it is necessary to analyze one in the context of the other. In the same way that macroeconomics and international relations are part of the process of producing and reproducing poverty, these are not exclusive, but intertwined with local spheres. Under this perspective, poverty and development can be striped off from their purely technical interpretation and brought to "the field", to the local encounters and relationships that also work to shape them. What I took from this course into this research was the notion that poverty is not something technical that can be measured and addressed only by the economic components. Instead, poverty is a changing, relational (to prosperity) and contested knowledge that varies according to specific historical contexts. Away from the one-sided analysis of per capita income, we find that poverty is part of social struggles, created by mechanisms that include, exclude and shape our societies (Broch-Due 1995).

I decided then, that I would like to learn more about these struggles from the people that better understand them within my research object: the people living in the favelas. I wanted to see how they organize themselves to fight against inequality and what kind of resources they make use of. While looking for possibilities of research that would allow me to keep this focus, I came in contact with Jane and the case of Vila Autódromo. Their case immediately struck me, because the community has resisted evictions since 1993 and they have done it in one of the most valued areas of Rio: Barra da Tijuca, the new real estate frontier. Another interesting aspect in their case is that in each attempt to remove the community, the City Hall had a different argument to justify it. Furthermore, the case involved a struggle for property rights, the very right of favelas to exist and their fight to become "legal". Considering that the use of urban space in Rio bears a distinct expression of social inequality, the dispute for this specific property appeared to be a potential case through which we could observe social struggles. Besides, it also involved the (il) legal aspects that have long contributed to the stigmatization of these communities as "not being part of the town".

I consider that the case of Vila Autódromo may contribute to our understanding of how communities living in a deeply unequal society can successfully mobilize to fight for

equal rights and to break with excluding structures. To know the processes and the actors that are part of this case can assist us to understand how these disputes happen on the ground, in the local sphere and why Vila Autódromo has succeeded in their resistance against eviction for so long while many other communities have been removed. I hope that a closer look at the case of Vila Autódromo can help to unveil the kind of social and political mechanisms that work to perpetuate conditions of exclusion and inequality in Rio de Janeiro and in Brazil. However, I also hope that it can show us how people disadvantaged by these mechanisms resist and fight against exclusion.

1.2 The case of Vila Autódromo

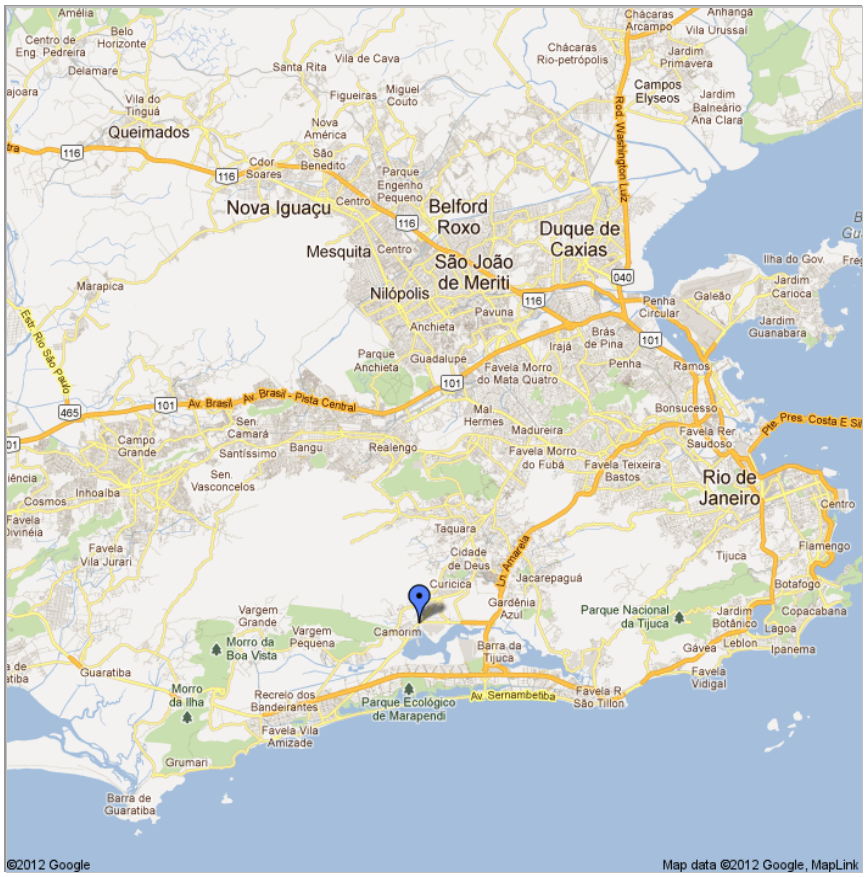
Vila Autódromo is a favela composed by 939 inhabitants distributed among 236 households[2] crammed between a lake, an automobile racetrack and a highway. The community, that began to settle it in the area around forty years ago as a fisherman's colony, has witnessed the real estate expansion of the West Zone of Rio the Janeiro. They are located between Barra da Tijuca and Recreio, where luxurious residential buildings, shopping malls and office complexes have been built since the 1970´s; these fairly "new" neighborhoods represent the modern face of Rio. Their wide and large avenues contrast with the dusty streets of Vila Autódromo, often flooded by the polluted channel of water and sewage that flows beside it.

The city of Rio de Janeiro won the right to host the 2016 Olympic Games on October 2nd, 2009. On the very same day the mayor of Rio de Janeiro, Eduardo Paes, announced that 123 favelas would be removed in Rio as part of the infrastructure plan designed to prepare the city for the Games and to remodel the transport system network. The removal of Vila Autódromo was part of this agenda. Initially, public authorities defended that the removal of the community was needed to give place to the Media Center and the Olympic Training Center. However, even when the location of these centers was moved downtown, the decision to remove the community remained. The new argument presented by the public administration is that a security perimeter was needed around the racetrack, which the residents would be unable to cross during the games.

The Residents' Association of Vila Autódromo began to mobilize against this political and administrative decision. Legally, the community still waited for the decision of the

[2] According to the IBGE Census of 2000.

judicial case that Rio de Janeiro's City Hall had filed in 1993. The municipal authorities requested the removal of Vila Autódromo arguing that the community was illegally occupying the land belonging to the racetrack perimeter, which they argued belonged to the city of Rio, and not the state of Rio.



Map 1. Location of Vila Autódromo in the city of Rio de Janeiro Source: Google 2012.

The residents' association, or *Associação de Moradores*, is an organized group of residents of a neighborhood or favela that elects representative members to present and pursue their common interests before public authorities. They have mobilized against these pressures since the beginning of the 90´s decade, when the real estate market started to expand towards the west zone of Rio and the property prices in the area began to rise. During the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio, public authorities argued that Vila Autódromo should be removed because it was an area of environmental interest. The community resisted the destruction of tractors closing the area for several days. The arguments differed in 2007, while Rio prepared to host the Pan-American Olympic Games; nevertheless, the overall purpose persisted: the removal

of the community. This time, according to Rio On Watch[3], the resistance against forced eviction has become "less heroic and more political, with the intense need to mobilize the community and form a network capable of lending visibility to and sustaining a campaign on behalf of the 123 communities threatened with removal by the Olympic Games" (Rio On Watch 2011).

The association has gathered the community to participate in public demonstrations against the decision of removal. They have also made use of new media strategies, like social networks on Internet to keep the residents informed and involved in the negotiations as to adhere support from civil society. Meanwhile, their leaders make regular visits to the Public Defender's office to make use of the legal support they provide. Their legal resistance is based on a "concession for use of the land", a document received by the community valid for 49 years, given by Rio de Janeiro's governor Leonel Brizola in 1994 and later extended to 99 years by the then Governor Marcelo Alencar in 1997. In practice, the concession gave them the legal right to reside and make use of the state land for the given period.

1.3 My research focus and objectives

The case of Vila Autódromo, in this thesis encompasses the ongoing struggle between public authorities and the favela dwellers. Therefore, it is necessary to present a historical survey of the relationship between the association and public administrations (in the Municipal, State and Federal spheres) and of other actors involved in their situation. The dispute about the removal of Vila Autódromo involves not only direct negotiations between the Association and the Municipal Government, but, we could also point out the role of the Public Defense office and actors from organized civil society such as NGO´s working to support the community. On the side of Rio's City Hall and adding pressure for the community's removal are the private capital real estate investors that will build the structures for the games. These are actors that have a direct participation in the community's struggle and therefore important to my analysis.

The focus of this study is to investigate the performance of the association in the process of fighting for their property rights and against the removal policies conducted by the

[3] Rio On Watch is a program launched in May 2010, by Catalytic Communities (CatComm), a US 501c3 nonprofit organization and Rio de Janeiro-based NGO. The program aims to bring visibility to favela community voices in the lead-up to the 2016 Olympics, to be held in Rio de Janeiro.

Rio de Janeiro city's administration, *Prefeitura do Rio de Janeiro*[4], during the past decades. In other words, I wish to analyze Vila Autódromo's case from the point-of-view of its dwellers, not indistinctly, but the organized body of residents composed by the residents' association. I want to know how this resistance happens in practice; how they organize themselves, what means they use to mobilize the community, what kind of partnerships they have, in short, how they work to resist eviction. In order to do that, I needed to know their history, the processes they have been through since their formation and their relationships.

Finally, I wish to reflect on how the case affects and it's affected by its context: the social-spatial inequality of Rio de Janeiro and the struggle for the integration of favelas into the city. In the development of this context I found also necessary to present a historical survey of the spatial, social and political organization of Rio de Janeiro, meaning, the historical context in which these relations of inequality were produced and reproduced. In my final considerations I wish to "bring back the case to its context", in that way I hope to begin and conclude this research linking the case to its context.

I have therefore organized the objectives of this research into three sections that are subdivided into more workable research questions:

Objective 1: To provide a historic overview of the relationship between the residents' association of Vila Autódromo and the Brazilian Government, represented in the three spheres of public administration: Municipal, State and Federal.

> Question 1: In which political and social contexts have the residents of Vila Autódromo organized the residents' association? What was the purpose that motivated their formation?
>
> Question 2: Since the establishment of this community, which were the public policies implemented? How were these negotiated with the residents and later with the association?
>
> Question 3: How has the association advocated the claims of the community in the political sphere? What are the means or channels they have made use of? Have these "means" changed during the years?

[4] *Prefeitura do Rio de Janeiro* is the public political-administrative organ of the City of Rio de Janeiro. When translating to English, for lack of a better word, I will use the expression Rio de Janeiro's City Hall, meaning the whole political-administrative organ and not its headquarters.

Objective 2: To investigate the role of the association both internally, in relation to the population of Vila Autódromo, as externally, in relation to linkages developed with other groups of civil society.

Question 1: How do the residents see the association? What functions do they expect the Association to perform? Does the Association perform any other functions besides local representation?

Question 2: What kind of relationship does the Association maintain with the NGO´s working in/with the community? Have these relationships changed during the years? Have they affected directly or indirectly the way the Association is organized and the means they make use of?

Objective 3: Based on this investigation, my final and overall purpose is to understand how the case of Vila Autódromo can help us to unveil social and political mechanisms that work to perpetuate conditions of exclusion and inequality in Rio de Janeiro and to know how people and/or communities can organize to resist or try to break with these structures.

The workable questions for this objective were undefined until I started to analyze the material collected in my field research. The reason is that I wished to maintain an "open focus" for my final considerations given that my knowledge of the case and of the association's role was quite limited. I knew, however, that the objective that motivated me to choose this topic in the first place was the wish to understand better the social struggles of favela dwellers in Rio de Janeiro, reflecting and learning from their practices. Therefore, my last objective reflects this wish to "go back to the context", translated into the following workable questions:

Question 1: Has the case of Vila Autódromo contributed to the fight to integrate favelas in Rio de Janeiro? If so, how?

Question 2: What practices can be drawn from the role performed by the residents' association in pursue for integration of favelas in Rio de Janeiro?

With these final questions in mind, I hope that the case of Vila Autódromo can be analyzed within the context of social and spatial exclusion of favela population in Rio de Janeiro and help us to understand how these processes take place on local spheres.

1.4 Thesis Outline

I have divided the thesis in seven chapters which could be defined by two main groups: chapters one to four build the groundwork for the presentation of my findings and analysis, which are made from chapter five to seven. The first chapter presents a brief introduction of the case as my objectives and more workable questions. I have also found appropriated to present a short report of my background in relation to the choice of the subject and my approach in the research process. The second chapter is designed to provide an historical and geographic background for the case itself and its analysis, drawing connections between the present situation of Vila Autódromo and the socio-spatial structures in which it is embedded. The third chapter is the presentation of the research design and methodology applied to this research. I have tried to link this chapter with the rest of the thesis by justifying my methodological choices in relation to the material collected on the field and my own choice of focus on the case. The context of data collection was a significant component in my self-reflections as well, justifying many of my analytical choices. In the fourth chapter I introduce the theoretical approach of the thesis. Following the same principles defined by the methodological framework, I try to keep a close link between this chapter and my analysis, wishing to clarify the process behind the choice for the analytical concepts I have applied. My goal was to show how the frameworks for this thesis, both methodological and theoretical, have developed concomitantly and how this process has extended during the entire research since its preparation, all through the data collection and analysis.

Having laid these foundations, I bring a full report of the case of Vila Autódromo in chapter five. This is the chapter where I present my findings describing the history of the community since its formation, also bringing the socio-spatial context in which it took place. I describe its long-lasting struggle with the City Hall of Rio de Janeiro until the present day and the legal aspects involving the case. The analysis of my findings is brought in chapter six where I also present reflections over the role played by the residents' association in their struggle against removal, their organization, goals and relationships. Finally, I present my concluding reflections on the case in chapter seven in an attempt to link my reflections to the broader context of the struggles lived by favela population. I conclude describing the contributions that the case of Vila Autódromo brings to the fight for social inclusion of favelas in Rio de Janeiro.

2. Background and context

2.1 Short introduction to Brazil

Brazil is the fifth largest country in the world, both in area and population. Over 190 million people occupy the 8.514.876,599 km^2 that composes Brazilian territory. This is an area large enough to fit the whole continent of Europe and it takes up almost half of South America's mass. Although the Brazilian population is large, the country is not densely populated, counting only 22,4 inhabitants per square kilometer, a modest rate for countries of the Southern Hemisphere. The population is, nonetheless, concentrated in the coastline of Brazil - where most of the big and medium cities are located. The urban population counts for more than 85 percent of the total (IBGE 2011).

The Federative Republic of Brazil is divided into 27 states. It is governed as a multiparty federal republic with two legislative houses: the Federal Senate and the Chamber of Deputies. The capital, Brasilia, was intentionally built in the geodesic center of the country as an indication of a "Government for the whole country", as President Juscelino Kubicheck declared at the time. Some critics insist that the reason for Brasília was in fact to move the political center to an isolated part of the country, away from the great urban centers and the possible popular uprisings, keeping the political power limited to a few elite groups. Founded in 1960, the city was projected in the shape of an airplane with the presidential room placed in the cockpit[5] (Skidmore 2010).

Since then, Brazil has had its shares of rises and falls. After the sky-high growth rates averaging above 10% a year in the period of 1968-1973, the country faced a long period of economic recession that would last until midt-1990. There was also a large step backwards in the democratic arena, when from 1964 to 1985, the government went under a military dictatorship that dissolved the congress and suspended the Brazilian Constitution. Since its democratic opening presidential elections have occurred without problems and the Labour Party (PT) had its first elected President in 2002, re-electing two consecutive terms after that. Today, Brazil has its first female president, Dilma Rousseff, also from the Labour Party.

The country has been long called the "sleeping giant" – because Brazil hasn't had the kind of political or economic rank that would be expected from its size and, especially, from

[5] The picture can well illustrate what the political history of Brazil confirms to us: since the dissolution of the Empire and foundation of the Republic in 1889, the country has had three periods of dictatorship: *A República da Espada*: 1889-1894; *O Estado Novo*: 1937-1945 and *O Regime Militar*: 1964-1985.

its number and variety of resources. However, this seems to be changing in the last years (Pearlman 2010:47). In the international political arena, Brazil has finally started to gain the kind of visibility aspired since the birth of its republic. The country is a founding member of the United Nations, the G20[6], the Mercosul[7] and it is one of the BRIC[8] countries. In 2005, the country finally paid off its debts with the IMF (The International Monetary fund) and became free from the structural adjustment requirements. In 2006, President Lula announced Brazil's self-sufficiency in oil, which according to him meant "independence" and "stability" for the Brazilian economy at a time when oil prices hit record on the international market. As a result of relative stability during the world's economic crisis of the last years, Brazil rose to the sixth position in the world's rank of Gross Domestic Product (GDP). The Brazilian GDP reached 2,4 trillion dollars in 2011 and passed, for the first time in history, Great Britain. The economic growth, also based on the GDP, had a remarkable rate of 7,5% in 2010 and though this number is expected to fall in 2011 the country has kept an overall economic stability during the past two decades.

According to the Indices of Sustainable Development of 2010 measured by the IBGE – The Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics: "The country maintains its rhythm of growth and improved in most of the social indices, however, persisting the social and regional inequalities" (IBGE 2010). Inequality is possibly one of the biggest challenges that Brazil has ahead. Despite having the sixth's highest GDP in the world, Brazil still holds the 84th position in the rank of Human Development Index of 2011. The Gini Index[9] reveals that income inequality is one of the highest in the world (UNDP 2011). Even if it has decreased during the last years – from 0,569 in 2005 to 0,519 in 2011 – it still means that the richest 1 percent of the population retains the same income parcel as the 50 percent poorest: 13 percent of total household income in the country. Such an unequal distribution of resources results in

[6] G20 is the group of finance ministers and Central Bank governors from the twenty major economies in the World. It is composed by 19 countries plus the European Union.

[7] The Mercosur is the Common Southern Market formed by five Latin American countries: Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay, Paraguay and Venezuela. Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador and Peru are associated members.

[8] Formulated by Jim O´Neil in 2001, BRIC is an acronym for the four major developing economies in the world: Brazil, Russia, India and China. In 2011, South Africa was also included, changing the acronym to BRICS.

[9] The Gini Index is the Gini index measures the extent to which the distribution of income or consumption expenditure among individuals or households within an economy deviates from a perfectly equal distribution. A Lorenz curve plots the cumulative percentages of total income received against the cumulative number of recipients, starting with the poorest individual or household. The Gini index measures the area between the Lorenz curve and a hypothetical line of absolute equality, expressed as a percentage of the maximum area under the line. Thus a Gini index of 0 represents perfect equality, while an index of 100 implies perfect inequality (World Bank 2012).

poverty levels three times higher than countries with a similar per capita income: 11,5 percent of Brazilian population is considered extremely poor (about 20 million people) and 30,3 percent are poor (Beghin 2008:1).

When we talk about land inequality, the numbers are even more acute. Brazil has never had a land reform, meaning that land distribution has slowly happened first by donation of the Portuguese crown to a few members of the court and then by regular commercial negotiations made in a deeply stratified society. The Gini Index for land ownership was extremely high in 1960: 0.827 and since then this number has indeed increased, reaching 0.872 in 2006. This means that Brazil has the most unequal land distribution in the world and that 10 percent of the largest properties in the country occupy about 78 percent of the total area (IBGE 2006).

The mechanization of agriculture in the 1960-1970's decade made millions of rural workers redundant and provoked the bankruptcy of innumerous small-scale land owners and producers that had no means to compete with modern large-scale production, increasing even more the rates of land concentration. In Brazil, the impoverishment of rural areas was intensified by the already highly unequal distribution of investments in the country's territory, another consequence of political power centralization in Brazil. The Southeast and South regions have historically benefited from pubic investments and policies, which made the industrialized and modern cities of these regions into migration clusters. It is estimated that between 1960 and 1980 about 30 million people were "expelled" from the countryside (Martine 1991:10) and in four decades (1960-2000) is counted that 108 million people migrated to the cities, most of them poor and with no other option than to establish themselves in favelas (Pearlman 2010:48). Even though the first favela, Morro da Providência, is officially dated from 1897 in Rio de Janeiro (Zaluar and Alvito 1998), it was about this time that favelas really started to grow in numbers and size, gaining the proportions that they present today: one-third of Brazilian urban population live in favelas or other informal settlements and over three-quarters of the Brazilian poor live in cities. The face of Brazilian poverty is in fact urban (Pearlman 2010:47).

Evidently this is not a phenomenon exclusive to Brazil. We are well aware of the urban explosion occurring in the "global South" during the past decades that created innumerous new squatter settlements and shantytowns in the world. What differentiates Brazil, however, is the contrast between its statuses as world economic power and the number of people living in poverty, in other words; it is the magnitude of the gap between rich and

poor. Pearlman (2010:48) highlights that the country's rates of urban poverty are only comparable to countries like Bangladesh and Nepal, which have only one-third of Brazil's per capita income.

The past 20 years have showed some improvement in income distribution and poverty elimination at a national level: in 1990 the richest quintile of Brazilian population earned 30 times more than the poorest, this number has fallen to 20 times in 2007. However, inequality in Brazil is still extreme and poverty follows a strong regional tradition: the North and Northeast regions have the highest levels that descend gradually towards the South (Rocha 2001). The concentration of income and land is still among the highest in the world and many of the social structures that gave shape to this stratified society are well and alive, reproducing conditions of poverty and inequality.

It is also interesting to think that Brazil was under the rule of a Portuguese dynasty for nearly 400 years out of its total 511 years of history. Due to this long past of domination, it is not a wonder that so much of the social structures still follow up the colonization model. Although it can be fairly simple to change an official status of colony to independent nation-state, it seems to be a much more complicated matter to change the very domination structures that founded these societies (Broch-Due 2000).

2.2 Rio in Brazil's history

On the first of January 1501, the first colonizers arrived in what is known today as Guanabara Bay. The Portuguese expedition, who set to explore the new founded lands of Brazilian coast, believed then that they had reached the delta of a great river. This is the reason why they named it Rio de Janeiro, "January's River" directly translated from Portuguese. Brazil had been discovered the year before on April 22, 1500, by a Portuguese ocean fleet led by Pedro Álvarez Cabral. The official version of Brazilian history explains the discovery of Brazil as a fortunate accident when the expedition intended in reality to follow the new sea route opened by Vasco da Gama to India. Instead of sailing around Africa towards east, the leading ship swung off course heading west. There have been, conversely, many other theories that oppose this "accident". Indeed, there has been plenty of debate about it; some historians believe that the expedition was meant to "find" this land while others state that they were merely following the route of previous secret voyages to Brazil (Skidmore 2010:10).

Rio de Janeiro played an important role in Brazilian history as the capital of the Portuguese Colony of Brazil from 1763 to 1815, capital of the United Kingdom of Portugal, Brazil and the Algarves from 1815 to 1822 and capital of independent Brazil from 1822 to 1960. In 1960, Rio lost its position to Brasilia, the modernist city projected to be the new capital of the country. However, during the first centuries of colonization, Rio had a minor role for the colony, which concentrated its occupation mostly in the Northeast region. In fact, Portuguese occupation was initially so timid that French invaders managed to stay for ten years in Rio, where they planned to establish a colony - the France Antarctique. Not until the Portuguese mobilized forces to expel them in 1565 was the city of Rio de Janeiro officially founded. With the foundation of Rio on March 1st, 1565, two fortresses were built on each side of the entrance of the Guanabara Bay in order to prevent permanently other assaults (Skidmore 2010).

It was during the period known as the "cycle of gold" that Rio began to gain importance to Portugal. This period, when the exploitation and exportation of gold dominated the economy of Brazil, lasted from 1695 to 1750. Even though Rio had a reasonable production of sugar before this period, it was the control of gold outflow overseas that placed Rio in the center of the colonial economy (Boxer 1962). Because Portugal taxed all the gold produced in Brazil at 20% of its value, it was important to develop a strategy to keep control of all the steps in the process of exploitation. Therefore, two official routes were designed for transportation, taxation and shipment of precious minerals and the chosen exportation harbor for both of them was Rio de Janeiro. This decision not only increased the importance of the harbor of Rio, but also created new and faster routes of access to inland villages. As a result of this, Rio took the place of Salvador as the capital of Brazil in 1763. The possibility of instant wealth attracted thousands of new immigrants from Portugal during the gold cycle. In 1690, the colony had an estimated population of 200.000 to 300.000, and in the year 1798 this number would increase several times, to an estimated 3.250.000 people (Boxer 1962).

When Napoleon Bonaparte invaded Portugal in 1807, the royal family fled and settled in Rio de Janeiro. A year later, Brazilian harbors were opened for the international commerce with "friendly nations", which in practice meant the United Kingdom. In fact, the end of the colonial pact (which stated exclusive commerce between colony and metropolis) was the condition required by England to escort the royal family from Portugal to Brazil. The royal family, its noble court and servants comprised about 15.000 people that stayed in Brazil from 1815 to 1822. During this period, Rio became the capital of the Portuguese Empire overseas,

registering the only time in history when a former colony governed its empire. These changes had a great impact in the architecture, culture and society of the time. The elite of Rio financed the construction of new buildings, universities, museums, theaters, squares and mansions in order to make the city more like a European capital. When the royal family returned to Portugal in 1822, the urban perimeter had expanded and been transformed and the population of Rio had doubled from 50.000 to 100.000 (Skidmore 2010:43).

After mining activities in Brazil started to decline, the production of coffee became responsible for a considerable share of the Brazilian economy. The Atlantic forest had been cleared in large portions of the Southeast Region, including the state of Rio de Janeiro, to give place to coffee plantations. However, the expressive reduction of forest coverage provoked problems in the water supply of the city at the same time as its demand increased. Therefore, coffee plantations expanded inlands and in the fertile valley of Paraiba, located between the states of Rio de Janeiro and Sao Paulo, the activity grew successfully. Great part of these lands were still largely concentrated in the hands of a few aristocrats in Rio de Janeiro that were now responsible for about 60% of its GDP. Until about 1870, this group of "coffee barons" of Rio, as they were called, dominated the country. When the soil began to give signs of depletion, plantations were gradually moved towards Sao Paulo and Espírito Santo and the economy of the state of Rio de Janeiro went into decline. Two major events in Brazilian history took place in Rio and marked the decree of its bankruptcy: the abolition of slavery in 1888 and the Proclamation of the Republic in 1889. By this time, the leading economic and political forces had moved to Sao Paulo, where they have remained partially concentrated until today (Kok 2005).

Although the economy of the state of Rio de Janeiro went into a long period of stagnation (that would only start to change with the income of oil royalties in the decade of 1990), the city of Rio continued to develop and expand, creating a full-size gap between the capital and the rest of the state. Moreover, the city remained capital of Brazil until 1960 and it is fair to say that it still holds a central place in political and social events that echo across the country. When the capital was moved to Brasilia, the city of Rio became the Guanabara state, being separated politically from the state of Rio de Janeiro. Nonetheless, only fifteen years later, in 1975, Rio would be again reintegrated into the state as its capital, as it is until nowadays (Abreu 1987).

Here I would like to make a brief distinction. In order to avoid misunderstandings and the repetition of long descriptions throughout this paper, I will refer to the city of Rio de

Janeiro merely as Rio de Janeiro or "Rio". When in reference to the state of Rio de Janeiro I will make use of the full description: "the state of Rio de Janeiro".

2.3 Rio in Brazil's geography

Brazil is divided in five great regions: South, Southeast, North, Northeast and Central-west. Rio de Janeiro state is located in the east part of the Southeast region, the most industrialized, urbanized and populated region of all (map 2). The accumulation of capital in this region during colonial times financed the industrialization process that took place in the XX century, maintaining the pre-eminency of the Southeast over other parts of Brazil (Santos 2001). In the year 2000, about 90,5 percent of the urban population in the country was concentrated in the Southeast region. Although it occupies only 10,85 percent of the Brazilian territory, it concentrates about 38 percent of the national population and it is responsible for approximately 49 percent of the GDP of the country (IBGE 2000).

The reason for this centralization was the accumulation of economic resources during the "Gold cycle" and the "Coffee cycle"[10] and the consequent political leadership that the Southeast Region assumed. The states of Rio de Janeiro and Sao Paulo have, for about three centuries, held most of the capital and investments in Brazil, consequently staging the industrialization process in the country. This political and economic pre-eminence resulted in a set of public policies that have historically favored the Southeast Region in terms of investments and infrastructure (Abreu 1987).

Rio de Janeiro is the third most populous state of Brazil with an estimated population of 16.112.637 people, representing 8,4% of the Brazilian population in the year 2011. From this total, a little over six million are in Rio city and about eleven million live in the metropolitan region of Rio. Of all the 27 Brazilian states, Rio de Janeiro is one of the smallest in extension, with an area of 43.696.054 km², slightly larger than Denmark. The Metropolitan area of Rio, or "Great Rio", as it is called, occupies only 5.292,139 Km^2 of this area but concentrates about 70% of its economy and population. The distribution of population in Brazil is highly uneven, both in the great regions and within the state of Rio de Janeiro itself (IBGE 2011).

As the second biggest city of Brazil, after Sao Paulo, Rio has the 20^{th} largest metropolitan area and the 30^{th} highest GDP in the world. The city also holds the second

[10] See section 2.2

highest GDP in the country, corresponding to 5,4% of the national total. The economy of the town is mostly concentrated in the third sector: about 65,28% comes from the service sector; 23,19% from tax revenue; 11,5% industrial activity and only 0,03% from agro business revenue (IBGE 2011). The underground economy[11] also represents a significant parcel of Rio's economy, showing the second highest absolute values in the country.

Map 2. Great Regions of Brazil

The Southeast region (*Sudeste*) shows in pink. Source: IBGE 2012

The underground economy in Brazil exceeded, in 2010, the mark of US$ 650 billion, trespassing the GDP of Argentina (FGV 2010). Then again, following the tradition of wealth concentration in Brazil, Rio has a Gini Index of 0,48 and poverty incidence reaches 23,85% of

[11] Underground economy, *Economia subterrânea*, is the term that substituted the former classification of informal economy in Brazil. It comprises all activities related to production of goods and services to governments deliberately not reported (FGV 2010).

the population (IBGE 2003). In 2011, Rio was appointed the 26th place in the ranking of the most expansive cities in the world, an extreme leap from the 48th position in 2009 (City Mayors 2011). In fact, since the city was chosen to host the FIFA World Cup 2014 and the 2016 Olympic Games, living costs have continuously increased, especially in the real estate sector.

Rio is also the most popular tourist destination in South America, attracting an average of 1,5 million tourists every year (Ministério do Turismo 2011). The statue of Christ the Redeemer and the Sugar Loaf Mountain are the most known images of the town. Since the 1930´s Rio has been nicknamed *Cidade Maravilhosa*, Marvelous City and pictures of the city in the popular imaginary often relate to postcards featuring the famous beaches of Copacabana and Ipanema in a golden sunset light. To sell this "image" was fundamental for the city's candidature to host the games and possibly one of the main reasons for the removal of Vila Autódromo, since the esthetic aspects of the community do not conform to the neighbor modern and glossy structures projected for the games.

Political-administrative organization of Rio de Janeiro

The case of Vila Autódromo involves the participation of several organs of public and political administration; therefore, it becomes necessary to present a brief explanation of these structures. Brazil is federative republic divided into 26 states and a federal district (the capital). The states are, in their turn, sub-divided into municipalities. Both states and municipalities hold their own independent administrations and elected governments. A governor elected every four years exercises the executive power of the state[12]; state courts exercise the judicial power. Nevertheless, it is the federal organs that decide over tax collection and define the budget's distribution among the states.

The municipalities are the smallest independent units of the Federation. They possess its own Organic Law that defines its political organization (though limited by the Federal Constitution). A mayor, elected every four years, exerts the executive power, and the City council decides over legislation. Elected representatives, in the same election than the mayor, form the city council. The number of councilors is defined by the size of population and in Rio they currently count fifty-one. There is also judiciary office specific to each municipality.

[12] Elections in Brazil are divided into two groups and held every two years; the first decides for Mayors and City councilors, the second for Presidents, Governors, Senators and Deputies. The term of office of all post is four years, except for senators, eight years.

2.4 Favelas in Rio de Janeiro

What is a favela after all?

Favela is the Brazilian word equivalent to "slum" in English; nonetheless, I intend to keep the Brazilian word due to its particular meaning. Different from slums in many other parts of the world, the favelas can be located exceptionally close to formal neighborhoods, a sight that is very characteristic of Rio de Janeiro though not restricted to this town (Zaluar and Alvito 1998). In cases like Rocinha, the largest favela in Brazil, the space that divides the favela from the wealthiest neighborhood in Rio de Janeiro is only a few meters. Technically, the term 'favela' identifies an illegal occupation of public or private land.

The Observatório de Favelas[13] (2009) defines favela as a territory characterized in part or totality by:

- Historic insufficiency in investments from the public and private (formal) enterprises, especially real estate, financial and services sectors.
- Strong social and spatial stigmatization by individuals of other areas of town.
- High unemployment rates and informality in labor relations.
- Buildings mostly constructed by the people and not according to State standards.
- Social appropriation of the territory mostly for habitation.
- Lower educational, economical and environmental indices than the City average.
- Occupation of urban areas characterized by high environmental vulnerability.
- Lower level of State sovereignty compared with the rest of the city.
- Higher population density.
- Neighborhood relationships intensely sociable and high values of common areas.
- Higher concentration of African-Brazilian population (sometimes indigenous depending on the region).
- Number of victims of lethal violence above the city average.

[13] Observatório de Favelas, *Favela's Observatory,* is a research organization that has developed several studies about the favelas in the last years.

Historically defined by illegality, many of these communities have become the nest of drug traffic networks and militias during the last decades (Valladares 2005). The connections between violence and favelas have often made headlines in Brazil and abroad, showing pictures of police invasions in the "parallel power territory". Movies like City of God and Tropa de Elite, watched by millions world wide, also enacted violent conflicts reinforcing the general view of these communities. However, this is not the reality of many of Rio's favelas and definitely not the case of Vila Autódromo, which is regarded as a "pacific" community. The connections between the organized crime and other favelas have contributed to reinforce the discourse of criminalization although cannot be considered the cause of its origin. Valladares (2000) explains that the favelas have been seen as "territory of illegality" long before the onset of drug traffic networks in these communities. Indeed, the criminalization discourse precedes the emergence of drug cartels by many decades.

Rio has often been referred to by academicians as a divided or parted town (Ventura 1994), both due to its huge socio-economic gaps and to its spatial organization that makes this inequality so visible, embodied in the concrete borders that divide the *morro e o asfalto*[14]. The case of Vila Autódromo is part of a conflictive history of housing public policies that dates from the beginning of the twentieth century when the first favelas emerged. The history of the favelas shows us that since the beginning, *o morro* has been alienated from the provision of public services and participation in decisions and agendas that would directly affect them. Public administrations have consistently kept this "illegal town" which counted 19 percent of Rio's total population, excluded from urban agendas (IBGE 2000). The first public policies executed in favelas date from the decade of the 1960's and were dominantly characterized by policies of removal. By this time, residents began to organize themselves into associations in order to resist removal and legitimize their occupation (Valladares 2000).

By the beginning of the 1990´s decade, the first public project for urbanization of favelas was launched. The favela–Bairro[15], *slum to neighborhood* program, has implemented

[14] *O morro e o asfalto* literally translated as the hill and the asphalt is a popular expression to identify the formal neighborhoods and the favelas.

[15] Favela-Bairro is a program implemented by the municipality of Rio de Janeiro with the support of IDB (Inter-American Development Bank) to improve the living conditions of families living in the poor informal neighborhoods of the city, known as favelas, since 1996. The program includes the provision of basic infrastructure (water, sewerage, drainage, street lighting, street paving, parks and sport areas, reforestation); social services (child-care centers; social-service centers with an emphasis on families, children and adolescents; income and work-generating activities); community organization and development; and land titling. Two additional loans have been approved since then: Favela Bairro II, which completed its execution in 2007, and Favela Bairro III, approved in December of 2010 (IDB 2011).

basic infrastructures such as water, sewage, drainage, street lighting, street paving, parks and sport areas in some of Rio's favelas. The third phase of this program has been approved in December 2010 and will be funded partly by a loan of 150 million US dollars from the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB 2011). In pace with the Favela-Bairro projects, there was a clear increase in academic research about the favelas and a handful of new community-based organizations and NGO´s started to emerge in the favelas since the 1990's. Many of these organizations work based on the discourse of right to citizenship and social justice in Rio's favelas. Although initially functioning independently from each other, several associations have during the last years developed collaboration with NGO´s and research centers, leading to a combination of academic and local knowledge. These have contributed to the public exposure of the problems faced by the favela population and to bring the favelas into the centre of discussions in public administrations (Machado da Silva and Leite 2004).

Since then, a long lasting debate about the use of the term *favela* and *favelados*[16] took place. Due the stigmatized meaning that these terms carried, several academicians and politicians defended the need for a more suitable term, which in many circles was substituted by *comunidades*, communities. Fueled by the favela-bairro projects and the idea that favelas should be granted the same status as neighborhoods, the communities became a common term to designate favelas. However, a counter-movement argued that the new term only worked to affirm the notion that favelas were indeed too undignified and degraded to keep their own names. These groups defended first and foremost they should proudly affirm their social and cultural heritage and fight for equal citizen rights. It should not be a change of identity, they meant, but an affirmation of their right to be and exist as favelas, of being recognized as citizens of the same category as the rest of the town and have access to the same rights. The result was that both terms are now used daily and in official settings and they do not necessarily always carry the ideological meanings entailed in those debates. In this research, I have also made use of both, although respecting and maintaining the choice that each of the persons, groups or organs have made. If an interviewee, document or article made use of the term *favela* I have not changed it. In the case of the association, for example, I noticed their preference for the use of community when referring to themselves and so I have kept this term in all their references.

[16] *Favelados* was originally the term used to indentify those who lived in the favelas but nowadays is commonly used as degrading word associated to poverty and dirt.

3. Research methods and fieldwork

3.1 Methodology

3.1.1 Research design

As the title of this thesis already suggests, the research design will be defined as a case study. There is a common agreement among social scientists that there is no singular definition of what a case study is. The discussion might begin with the simple question of what a case is; to that, social scientists can answer in many different ways and even give multiple answers (Ragin and Becker 1992:3). Such undefined concept has given place to a tendency to conflate qualitative study and case study, which according to Ragin and Becker (1992:4) defended, should be utterly resisted. According to the authors, in order to define "a case" the researcher must, almost concomitantly, define "a case of what" this is and that is a question that one might only find out after all or good part of the empirical data has been collected and analyzed. For this reason, the question: "what is this a case of?" must be asked several times, in an exploratory manner, while the researcher can reflect over the interaction of ideas and evidence (Ragin and Becker 1992:6). It might also be helpful to keep in mind that a "case may change both in the hands of the researcher (during the course of the research and when results are presented) and in the hands of the researcher's audience" (1992:8).

Though these reflections can be valuable to carry with while defining the research process, there is still the need to have a defined idea of what our case is and what it is going to be about, safe guarding the flexibility to change along the way. Therefore, I chose to apply Bryman's (2008:52) definition of case study as the "detailed and intensive analysis of a single case", including, among others, research on a single community or organization, which also applies to my research object: the case of Vila Autódromo and the role of the residents' association. According to Bryman (2008:52-54) a case study can be defined as:

- The detailed and intensive analysis of a single case;
- It is concerned with the complexity and particular nature of the case in question;
- It is not necessarily a qualitative research;
- The case is an object of interest in its own right and the researcher aims to provide an in-depth elucidation of it;

- Does not present external validity / generalizability, or a representative sample.

When considering the case in question I believe that an "in-depth elucidation" can help us to understand how the processes of socio-spatial exclusion in Rio are developed locally, in practice. There is no conclusive or homogenous definition of what a favela is, and it is known that the conditions between one community and another may vary immensely. To Pearlman (2010:150), the only common characteristic to all favelas is the stigmatization that they suffer. In this way, Vila Autódromo is like any other favela in the sense that it bears a set of misconceptions and /or preconceptions that might or not be truthful: considered illegal even though they possess a concession for use of the land; consider violent even though they don't live this reality; considered poor, ignorant and alienated from society, even though most judge to have a dignified life and shown more political engagement than most of Rio's neighborhoods.

Additionally, this can also be a case where it is easier for us to observe how these processes of exclusion and stigmatization occur on the ground since the reality of Vila Autódromo does not gives pretexts for such. In practice, Vila Autódromo does not present any verified treats for the safety, environment or living quality of the neighborhood and that makes it easier to focus on what is happening in the social structures rather than on questions about violence and public safety. Another aspect that contributes to the clarity of this case is that because of their legal battle with the City Hall, this community has gathered a great deal of useful data about themselves and their neighborhood. The publicity of their struggle and need for the production of official reports to be used in court is invaluable when we think that research in so many other favelas in Rio would be almost unfeasible due the difficulty of access to information. Finally, their organization represented by the residents association and the dialogue maintained with several external partners makes the access to the community even easier and research about social structures viable.

3.1.2 Research methods

Even though a case study is not necessarily qualitative research, I found that the methodology that better suits this case study object is a qualitative one. Considering my choice of focus and objectives, the model for qualitative research design as proposed by Maxwell (2005) was of great assistance. An interactive model that entails constant

interactivity and flexibility between five main components: purposes, conceptual context, research questions, methods and validity. He highlights that "in qualitative research design it is something that goes on during the entire study, not just at the beginning" (Maxwell 2005: 12). These principles are also in line with the notions of case study as presented by Ragin and Becker (1992). Such a model does not entail a lack of structure, on the contrary, it implies that the existing structure is flexible and interconnected and the researcher can have the necessary "space" to move back and forth between the different components of the design (Maxwell 2005:3-4).

Moreover, Bryman defines a qualitative research as inductive as in relation to theory. It is based on empirical enquire, and its findings commonly produce empirical generalizations. Interpretivism orientates the epistemological aspect of the research as constructionism provides the guidelines to its ontology (2008:384-389). In order to illustrate better the nature and objectives entailed in a qualitative research, the author emphasizes the main characteristics that I could, without difficulty, recognize in my own study:

- Because the subject matter of social sciences (people and their social world) can attribute meaning to events and to their environment, many qualitative researchers express commitment to view events and the social world through the eyes of the people they study. This empathetic stance is in tune with interpretivism and demonstrates well the epistemological links with phenomenology, symbolic interactionism and "verstehen". The risks is going "too native" and lose focus, privileging one side of the social scene. (Bryman 2008:385).
- Descriptions and emphasis in context: the importance of context to understand a social event (goes back to the classic studies in social anthropology), the danger is falling in excessive description and lose focus of the case. (Bryman 2008:385)
- The emphasis on process tends to view social life in terms of processes, in a number of different ways: concerns to show events and patterns unfold over time (often conveying a strong sense of change and flux) which might be seen in the use of quite different approaches to data collection (Bryman 2008:388).

There are two other main characteristics of qualitative research as described by Bryman (2008), flexibility (limited structure) and concepts and theory grounded on data, these will be discussed in a following topic about methods of data collection and analysis.

3.2 Data collection and analysis

3.2.1 Fieldwork and experiences: the Context of data collection

Contacting the association

My first contact with the case of Vila Autódromo happened through an article that I read on Rio On Watch in June 2011. Since then, I started an online research on the community and their case in order to gather data for the preparations to my fieldwork. I contacted CatComm (The NGO that founded Rio On Watch) through e-mail. They agreed to put me in touch with the leaders of the association and meet me when I arrived in Rio so they could present what they knew about the case and the community. After the previous preparations for the field I arrived in Rio in the beginning of September 2011. First step was to meet the founder and director of CatComm. She shared with me their knowledge about Vila Autódromo's history and struggle and putted me in touch with the leaders of the association. CatComm had cooperated with the community for about two years and they were considered trustworthy by the association, which was extremely important at that particular time. According to her, the pressure to remove Vila Autódromo had intensified in the past weeks and several rumors about secret negotiations (between the association leaders and the City Hall) were causing an atmosphere of suspiciousness in the community. It was therefore vital to the success of my field research to have an "inside connection", especially because I had planned to focus on the case by the association's point of view.

My impressions from the field

I was invited by the president of the association to come to a meeting that would happen Sunday, September 9th 2011 and we agreed to meet then. The leaders had summoned the whole community for an emergency meeting in order to clarify rumors that there was already a new land designated to the community and that their removal was imminent. That was the first time I visited Vila Autódromo and I was surprised by how large and neat the main street was in comparison to most favelas I have been during my life. Even though unpaved, it was very clean and smooth (not so many wholes and bumps). I found the head office of the association, a very simple building; painted on the facade was: Associação de Pescadores e Moradores da Vila Autódromo AMPAVA n. 16, "Association of Fishermen and residents of Vila Autódromo". There were about twenty people coming and going and another few were working to remake a picture board in the head office. The pictures were taken

during the events that the association of communitarian works organized to improve the place. Others came in to greet each other, talk and prepare the last details for the meeting. I presented myself to Alva[17], one of the leaders of the association and explained my contact through CatComm and the theme of my research. I was introduced then to the other two leaders who sounded very positive about having me "writing about their story" and agreed to help me in anything that I needed. I was relieved for being accepted and my biggest challenge that day was the amount of mosquitoes in the place, it was hard for me to focus on any conversation because they would bite my lips while I spoke; the residents though, seemed amazingly undisturbed.

The meeting happened in a football field behind the office of the Association. A lot of extra illumination had been put on; chairs were set up, powerful sound equipment was being tested and banners were hung behind an improvised stage. There were two people filming the meeting. One of them had professional filming equipment and I later found out that he had made the video that would be shown that night, which told the story of another community's removal[18]. The other was the daughter of one of the leaders, responsible to film all interesting events for the records of the association. I joined the "guests", defined as those that don't live in the community but are somehow connected to their "cause". They were about fifteen to twenty people presented as engineers, architects, researchers, activists, lawyers, public prosecutors, and leaders of other residents' associations.

The meeting was opened with a greeting from Mrs. Jane (the social director), who explained that there was a list where everyone who wished to speak could sign up for his or her turn. A speech by the president followed. He gave a summary of the last events and made clear that no negotiation was happening without the knowledge of the community, affirming that the leadership of the association was committed to the "cause" of resisting removal and standing their ground against offers from the City Hall. Everything, he assured, was being passed forward in the meetings and they should not trust any other rumors that caused division, instead they needed more than ever to stand together to resist the pressure. The following speeches made by guests and residents supported the president's view, confirming his version and reaffirming the need to stand together against removal and await the court's decision. By this point I counted about 150 to 200 people in the meeting, many of them standing, since there were no chairs for everyone. It was about eight o'clock at night on a

[17] The real name is omitted to protect her identity.
[18] The video is called "Vila Taboinhas – Vargem Pequena State of exception" and shows the partial demolition and removal of Vila Taboinhas in 2010, a community located in a close neighborhood to Vila Autódromo.

Sunday and it hadn't stopped raining for about half an hour. To my surprise, again, none of this had stopped the participants from staying and cheering loudly after each speech. My first impressions were marked by action, enthusiasm, and organization.

The next two weeks the meetings with the leaders were quite difficult. Because of the Rock in Rio[19], a Rock festival happening a few meters away, the driving access to the community was limited to public transportation and only cars that had received a sticker from the City Hall were allowed in. The leaders were very busy managing and distributing the stickers to the residents and some days I had to wait for several hours until they were free to talk with me. However, I thought helpful to spend those hours in the association's office with them and be able to observe their day-to-day tasks as they dealt with residents and public authorities. I also volunteered to help in practical tasks, which gave me more time with them and helped our dialogues to happen in a more natural, relaxed way.

Though part of my material was collected during this day-to-day interaction, I also managed to separate specific times for two to three personal interviews with the three leaders of the association. I was invited and attended their meetings during the period of my research, not only residents' meetings but also the ones happening with their partners and collaborators. Even after the Rock in Rio had passed it was still difficult for me to have "exclusive" time to talk to them. By this time, one of Rio's biggest newspapers was publishing several articles about the community's situation and the leaders were almost constantly busy with interviews and meetings. An important reminder is that since their work as association leaders is not paid, they were most of the day busy with their jobs or personal tasks. I decided then that it was essential to use every opportunity I could to be with them, even though it was not a time especially set aside to talk with me. I tried to visit them every time I knew one of them would be in the office, sometimes doing an interview, helping in some way or simply observing.

3.2.2 Methods of data collection and analysis

Regarding the methods of data collection and analysis, I have made use of the following:

[19] Rock in Rio is a series of music festivals considered the largest music festival in the world, with 1.5 million people in the first edition, 700,000 in both the second and fourth editions, about 1.2 million in the third, and about 350,000 people in each of the 3 Lisbon editions. The festival was held in Rio in the years of 1985, 1991, 2001 and 2011.

- Observation at the residents' association of Vila Autódromo: present in activities, meetings, protests and visits;
- Qualitative interviews with the leaders of the association, partners and residents;
- Document analysis in open sources and city archives: qualitative data and quantitative data.

Documents

Unfortunately, I had no opportunity to interview the public authorities involved in the case such as members of the secretary of Habitation or the current administration of Rio's City Hall. However, I did not consider it to be fundamental to do so since I wished to analyze the case from the association's point of view. Therefore, the presentation and analysis of the relationship between the community and the City Hall are based on two sources: the account of the residents and the association leaders; and from the city Hall's side, a collection of official documents and declarations made by its representatives. I did not take into account the report that the residents made from closed meeting with the City Hall and that for two main reasons: I would have no way of confirming or not these reports and ultimately, it would be the administrative decisions and public policies determined by the authorities that would count for the community's future. Since this is a public, political-administrative organ it seemed to me that this was a logical approach to the viability of this research.

About the reliability of the documents used, I have selected only the data that could be traced to official governmental sources, such as digital governmental data-basis, reports and websites. Regarding government actions and policies I have omitted informal or oral reports that could not be confirmed with more then one or several sources. I have also made use of several interviews with government representatives and press declarations to the media (newspapers, television channels and other media channels). A way to "filter" and verify this data was to confirm if they were in line with public announcements found in the official governmental channels. I did not see this point to represent a problem for the reliability of the research (concerning public declarations from the government) since there was no conflict of information between those. Besides, I have observed during my fieldwork that the public authorities have often used the newspapers as a channel of communication to the community. More than once, while I was in Rio, the residents got to know about a decision of the City Hall regarding the community through the newspapers, only to be contacted later by them. For this reason, newspapers articles have represent an additional source of information in this case. On the reliability of documents collected for the community's legal defense and

resistance movement, I had the possibility to confirm these in interviews and observation (of meetings) both with the association and with its partners. These included videos, maps, reports, articles, photos, websites, etc.

Interviews

Following the premises of qualitative research methods, I chose to use semi-structured and unstructured interviews depending on the conditions. When I had the possibility for exclusive interviews I made use of a flexible outline containing from six to ten question that could be changed or skipped along the way, I could also add new questions according to the direction that the interview took. In practice, it means that I have made use of a different outline for each interview. According to Bryman (2008:389) many qualitative researchers are against "approaches to research that entail the imposition of predetermined formats on the social world". Because of this preference for unstructured approach to the collection of data, qualitative researches adopt methods that don't require highly specific research questions in advance, less structured interviews in order to gain people's perspectives and have flexibility to change direction in the course of the investigation. I found this approach to be the most suitable for my research since I had limitations of time and context, many times having to use the opportunity to interview during or between meetings. In such cases I have made use of unstructured interviews that could be focused in one or two questions that could lead me to new sources for data collection.

Observations

My observations were defined by: participating in community meetings with the association (meaning meetings promoted by the association where all the residents were convened to participate); meeting between the leaders of the association and partners and daily encounters in the office of the association between the leaders and with residents. To collect the data resulting from those I made use of a voice recorder, video camera, photographic camera and notes, which I later transcribed and selected to present in my results.

3.3 Limitations, values and ethics

3.3.1.Limitations

Practical limitations

The first practical limitation I encounter was related to mobility from and to the community. Though the distance from where I was staying was not very long, I lost many hours in traffic. The already usual heavy traffic of automobiles in Rio was even worse than usual due to the works for the expansion of roads in town (also part of the preparation for the Games). My original plan was to try to rent a place in the community and live there during the period of research, however, I understood very early that this was not well seen by the association. The reason is that the concession for use of the land that Vila Autódromo received does not allow them to rent out the properties since this would be a kind of profit from the land. I had no other choice than commuting back and forth and unfortunately wasted many valuable hours in traffic jams.

On another occasion I had been invited by the president of the association to observe and record (with a voice recorder) a meeting they would have with the mayor, the housing secretary and public defenders. Unfortunately, I never made to the Town Hall in time because a concert of Justin Bieber literally stopped the traffic in all the main routes of the city. No need to say that this would have been an invaluable opportunity for my research and my only participant observation involving public authorities. I could not use any of the reports brought by the president since there was no one there to record it and consequently no way of validating them. Lastly, I had no access to the community during the days of Rock in Rio since all public transportation around the concert area (where Vila Autódromo is located) was closed for private automobiles and it was necessary to wait for hours for public transportation due to the crowds.

On the other hand, these events made me better understand the arguments that residents presented against being removed to another place. Nowadays, most of them live or study close to their houses and in a town where locomotion means hours in traffic and high expenses with transportation, the removal could result in several practical problems for them also in these terms. In addition, they also show how unprepared these mega events are when considering the citizens that need to move around in town while attending their daily duties.

Limitations of data collection and analysis

I had expected to encounter limitations in the collection of official data while making a historic survey of the relationship between the association and public administration organs. Due to the informality of favelas settlements in relation to official statistics, legislation and policies, it is usually difficult to access historic official records about them. However, the fact that their court case has promoted a great deal of gathering of information about Vila Autódromo I was surprised by the amount and variety of documents, reports and data, I was able to collect for the survey.

The nature of the data I had access to also had an impact in the direction that the research took. I was practically unable to interview the residents due to the suspicious rumors running in the community. Since no one knew who I was (except for the leaders), no one could assure that it was safe to pass any kind of information to me, as far as they were concerned I could be an informant to the City Hall representatives. Only in two opportunities I could interview residents directly (towards the end of my research period) when the daughter of one of the leaders of the association accompanied me. The result of this limitation was that I had to focus more on the data provided in official reports and open sources and less in the individual reports of residents.

The general limitations of a qualitative research can be summed in four aspects: being too subjective, difficult to replicate, presenting problems of generalization and lack of transparency (Bryman 2008:391-392). Since my research was defined as a case study, I did not aim for replication or generalization of my results; actually, I was most concerned about not becoming too subjective and keeping transparency throughout the process. I tried to address these questions in two ways: by focusing, or giving more weight to the official reports of the case and by selecting my data based on reliability. This means that I decided to set aside all data that I could not validate, even though they could have been valuable for the case. In spite of this, I do not consider that the main focus of the case was distorted or that its participants were misrepresented in any way, I'd rather choose to have "less data" than unreliable data.

Lastly, the different methods used to collect data from the association and from the City Hall could mean that this research does not present a balanced description of their relationship. In reality, it does not, but that has never been an aim either. Considering the enormous difference of resources, access to mass media and political power that City Hall representatives possess, it would be unreasonable to suggest that we could present this case

equally represented. In fact, I wished to analyze the case through the eyes of the association - the group of representatives of Vila Autódromo - and since the City Hall representatives have kept an official, distant relationship with the community, I did not find it to be incoherent to limit their representation to this official role. On the other hand, the community's struggle also takes place beyond the official court case, it happens in the mobilization of residents and partners that can strengthen their power of negotiation and on the dialogue that can reinforce their ideology for equal citizenship.

3.3.2 Values and ethics

During this research, especially in the field, a good dose of self-reflection from my part was necessary. First and foremost considering that I was partially familiar with the social structures I was investigating, and was undoubtedly, bringing with me a variety of biases based on my life experiences growing up in Rio, while relating to both ends of the social scale. At the same time that my background made it possible for me to gain access to a group that otherwise could be difficult to enter, it also meant that it would be virtually impossible to be neutral in my approach. For this reason, I considered wiser to clearly assume an approach that privileges the community's perspective and let my awareness work as a kind of defense and accusation advocates, constantly questioning my choices and results, in order to try to present the case in the most truthful possible way. These ideas were confirmed to me by the reflections of Delaney about fieldwork. To the author, this is an interactive and experimental situation where what one brings with oneself is as important as what one takes from it (Delaney 1988 in: Stensrud 2004:19). This means that my background, gender, social status, age, civil state, race, are all aspects that will define how much access I will gain in field and consequently how much information I can get. Nonetheless, they will also work to influence my own reflections and results.

There were also several considerations to be made about safeguarding the informant's private life and autonomy. I explained to the leaders of the association that the standard procedure in studies like mine was to anonymize all participants in order to protect their personal identities. Nevertheless, they insisted that I kept theirs and the community's real names. They explained that their objective was to promote, as much as possible, their history and struggle and that my research would be of no use to them if they were to be anonymized. To them, their roles as the community's representatives rely on a democratic election and bear

the same character as the roles played by politicians. For this reason, I agreed to respect their requirements and maintain the real names of both leaders in the Association, Mrs. Jane Nascimento and Mr. Altair Guimarães.

Nonetheless, I have anonymized the name of all other participants and interviewees in the community, either by not mentioning their names or by changing them. I have also omitted all personal information about them and abstained from the use of photos where it was impracticable to gain consent from all persons, such as the residents meetings or protests. Moreover, I decided to keep the real names of all public authorities. I understand that their role as public representatives entails the need to be accountable for their administrations to civil society. Except for the public figures in this case, I have tried, by all means, to protect the personal security and autonomy of its participants and safeguard their privacy according to the guidelines defined by the Norwegian Social Science Data Services (NSD).

4. Theoretical approach

4.1 Literature review

Background and Context

My literature review began long before I had defined my research topic. Even though I was certain that I would like to do research about the favelas, I still didn't know exactly what topic within this object I would focus on. So I decided to start my reading with a loose-fitting approach and reflect over some of well-regarded academic works being done in the area. Eventually, I was drawn to the question of habitation rights for two reasons: the current public policies of removal of favelas happening during the mayor Eduardo Paes' administration (2009-2012) and the fact that this discussion bring us to very right of favelas to exist. In the second chapter I drew a brief background for my case study presenting Brazil, Rio de Janeiro and the favelas. In this presentation, my main sources were the works of Valladares (2000; 2005), Ventura (1994), Zaluar and Alvito (1998), Skidmore (2010), Abreu (1987) and Pearlman (2010).

Valladares, Ventura, Zaluar and Alvito have produced essential academic contribution to the study on favelas. They are among the most respected theorists in the field and have laid the basis for much of the social research that would be made on these communities later on. Valladares has brought important reflections on the social construction of favelas as a problem to the city. Through the analysis of their history and public policies directed to them, she has provided us with a rich insight of these socio-spatial processes that made favelas (and the social perception of them) what it is today. Ventura was the first author to present the idea of Rio as a parted town; his works also brought great contribution to the debate of social-spatial inequalities in Rio de Janeiro raising discussions about the *o morro e o asfalto*. Zaluar and Alvito provided a historical survey on the formation of favelas during the last one hundred years, raising important questions on the Brazilian social and economic structures in which this process was embedded.

Regarding the historical and geographic background on Brazil and Rio de Janeiro, Skidmore was a considerable source for the thesis. His summary on Brazilian history entitled: *Brazil: Five Centuries of Change*, covers the most important historical events in the history of the country since its discovery and also brings helpful reflections over how these have contributed to form the Brazil we know today. I believe that the fact that this was a non-

Brazilian author also brought a new perspective of these events to me. The contextualization of the case in Rio de Janeiro's history and geography was based on approach of Abreu in his work *The Urban Evolution of Rio de Janeiro* * he present us the socio-economic and political frames that guided the spatial evolution of Rio.

Pearlman could also be included in the category of contextualization of favelas, however, I have consulted her last publication: *Favela: four decades of living on the edge in Rio de Janeiro* for several other purposes throughout the entire thesis, including my analysis. I consider her historical and anthropological analysis of these communities to be a precious source to anyone studding favelas. I also found it to be pertinent, from the development studies point-of-view, the way she situated the forty years of research in the broader context of urban poverty and mega-cities, bringing a more global context to the case.

4.1.1 Theoretical framework

As a theoretical framework, I deemed it suitable to apply the concept of democratic development as explained by Peet and Hartwick (2009) considering the particularities of the case of Vila Autódromo. They affirm that critical theories play an important role in contesting and deconstructing conventional development discourses by pointing out the inconsistencies of economic goals and policies that have not been capable of reducing inequality. However, 'democratic development' does not discard the modern idea of 'development' as such. In fact, they argue that the modern principles of democracy, emancipation and progress are valuable in their core although they have been "corrupted by the social form taken by modernity – capitalism" (Peet, and Hartwick 2009:290). The intention is then to bring new forms of both democracy and development thus defining development "as social transformation on behalf of the world's poor people, which is democratic in intent and effect". In summary, to combine the "two concepts together, democratic development means transforming the conditions of reproduction under the control of directly democratic and egalitarian social relations so that the needs of the poorest people are met." (Peet, and Hartwick 2009:290).

Furthermore, Broch-Due (Broch-Due 1995) declares to be fundamental to distinguish between, what she calls, "thick" and "thin" concepts of poverty and development. To approach these from a merely technical perspective, based on numbers and statistics, we would be left only with a "thin" concept, incapable to explain the complexities behind social struggles. This superficial perspective has lead to production of many blueprints within the

development filed which have caused more damage than good. She explains that the vocabulary used in the field of development often expresses this superficiality of approach. This can be illustrated by the use of terms such as "to lift someone out of poverty" or "to fall under poverty line", as if poverty was a condition to be cured or fixed with a simple increase in income or by moving up in the economic scale defined by statistics. When we take such an approach, we tend to ignore the many aspects that affect directly and indirectly one's living conditions. This does not mean to aim for a full investigation of these relationships, since they would be too numerous and complex to be viable, but it means to have a more holistic approach, assuming that the question cannot hold a single answer or analysis. A "thick" concept of development and poverty is one that considers the issue by a prismatic point of view, encouraging the dialogue between different fields and approaches and working to deconstruct single-viewed blueprints of development (Broch-Due 1995).

Broch-Due considerations can be placed under the broader critical debate to development presented by Escobar. He defends that the idea of development is artificially constructed and "relies on the perpetual recognition and disavowal of difference – feature inherent to discrimination" (Escobar 1999:386) and explains that poverty became an "organized concept and the object of a new problematization" (1999:382). And it was in this way, that the normalization of development became the perfect argument for the need to manage poverty and consequently, the poor. It made acceptable to conceive "social life as a technical problem, as a matter of rational decision and management…" (1999:385).

This framework served as a broad foundation for the beginning of my research while it provided the necessary "opening" for the development of a more defined analytical approach during field and data analysis. Due to its inductive nature, this is a common method to qualitative researchers, which tend to review literature throughout the entire research process, including after and during the analysis of findings. Hence the theory ends up being part of the result rather than just the basis for it (Bryman 2008:94).

4.2 Concepts

The employment of analytic concepts in qualitative research also follows this rather flexible approach to theoretical framework, when aiming to "give a very general sense of what to look for and act as a means for uncovering the variety of forms that the phenomena to which they refer can assume" (Bryman 2008:373). As the researcher moves forward in this

process, it is possible to select, adjust and readjust the concepts that will be used in the analysis of the case thus following the interactive model proposed by Maxwell[20] (2005).

As I reflected over my research findings, I was able to identify and define the concepts that better suited the nature of my case study. It is important to remember that even though I have chosen to apply the methods of a qualitative research, this work remains under the frames of a case study design. According to the guidelines given by Ragin and Becker (1992), it must maintain an open approach, defined by the recurrent question "what is this a case of?" throughout the entire research process[21]. Bearing this in mind, I have selected four main concepts to develop my analysis: state, civil democracy, social movements, and citizen claims, the first being only for the purpose of elucidating the use of the word and identity of "state".

4.2.1 What is the state in this context?

The aim of this research is to investigate the role that the residents' association plays in negotiating rights and duties that could enable them to "transform the conditions of reproduction" of a deeply unequal city, where the favelas express in their spatial configuration the social structures that perpetuate their condition of exclusion. The associations are part of the strategies of mobilization developed by favela dwellers in order to strengthen their power of negotiation. To access the history of the relationship between the association and the ´state` might help us to understand how these negotiations happen on the ground.

However, the use of the concept of "state" and the idea of what constitutes a "state" is not only contested, "its usage is also flexible, dynamic, and far from uniform" (Krohn-Hansen and Nustad 2005:4). I believe that an anthropological perspective of "state" will be most appropriate to the framework of this research since I intend to focus mainly on the analysis of local interactions between the association and the public representative bodies rather than debating over its abstract, non-material forms of representation. Consequently I decided to apply the anthropological definition that "state formations are outcomes of encounters and forms of interaction; they have been shaped through struggles over influence, resources and meanings. Any State formation that exists in reality has been produced through constant negotiation ´on the ground´" (Krohn-Hansen and Nustad 2005:13). Therefore, in order to

[20] See section 3.1.2.
[21] See section 3.1.1.

avoid a conflation of the term, I will name the actual public-administrative representative ´bodies` to which the association has or has had relationship.

This position also implies that state formation is a constant shifting field of "power relationships, everyday practices and formation of meanings" (Krohn-Hansen and Nustad 2005:12). Therefore, this definition implies to:

> ...change the focus of analysis to the many practices of power and mundane and ritual forms that constitute the state. It invites the researcher to examine in details how a particular state is produced in everyday encounters at the local level – in those contexts where the state ´bodies` representatives and individuals and groups interact.
>
> (Krohn-Hansen and Nustad 2005:12)

Considering also the possibility that different administrations, might they be in the Municipal, State or Federal spheres of Brazil, could have developed different relationships with local organizations, I intend to make reference to the respective tenure and terms of office. This might also be useful to identify the different actors and interests involved in local negotiations, whereas a general use of the term "state" could work to mask them, presenting a false image of singular common interests.

4.2.2.Civil democracy

The concept of civil democracy is proposed by Caldeira and Holston (1999) as a tool of analysis to differentiate between "political democracy" and "real democracy": the first one being defined by the political system and the second by the realization of democratic citizenship. Though Brazil has carried out an increasing democratization process since its political re-opening in the 1980's, the need for cultural and social changes that secure civil rights of citizenship and a democratic rule of law are still very much in process. Without these two, they defend that "the realization of democratic citizenship remains disabled. It is increasingly evident in the new democracies that without this realization, political democracy loses its legitimacy and efficacy. It suffers not only as a means to frame social interaction but also as a mode of governance" (1999:692). Nonetheless, they do not perceive this process as cumulative or linear, instead, they define it as, overall, disjunctive, meaning a "mix of progressive and regressive elements, uneven, unbalanced, and heterogeneous"(op. cit.). In other words, it varies with historical contexts and local settings, and it doesn't apply equally to every citizen.

Some of the consequences of the tendency that "uncivil democracies" have to

delegitimize institutions of law and justice are the criminalization of the poor and an unequal and uneven distribution of citizen rights (Caldeira and Holston 1999:692). This civil[22] component of citizenship serves to mediate society and state, in an ambiguous but not dichotomous way elucidated by the authors as follows:

> …the civil sphere differentiates society from the political system by defending the former from the abuses of the latter; however, it also integrates the two by utilizing state power to confront relations of inequality and domination within society itself, and to shape into certain kind of citizen-subjects. In the later sense, therefore, civil democracy depends on the state's capacity to impose sanctions. Highlighting this ambiguous mediation our use of civil embraces a paradox of modern democracy. Although society needs protection from the state, it is only within the framework of a state that this is possible. Thus, citizenship is a complex regulatory regime by which the state molds people into particular kinds of subject, and by which citizens also hold the state accountable to their interests. We use the notion of "civil" to emphasize this complex imbrication of state and society through citizenship.
>
> (Caldeira and Holston 1999:293)

An uncivil democracy could be then defined by a society where this ambiguous mediation does not occur in its ideal form; instead, it calls for a civil resistance against an authoritarian state. This position is also supported by the works of Machado da Silva and Leite (2004:74) on Brazilian democracy. The authors hold that in Brazil " the public space is constituted as a broken space, hierarchical, fragmented and emptied of its potentially democratic content by the state apparatus." In order to promote democratic consolidation, these should operate as space for "discussion, conflict, dialogue, negotiation, composition between actors and interests…" (op. cit.). When state institutions do not work as such, "they tend to be reduced to mere apparatus, deprived of democratic content." For them, the reason relies on the fact that on the one hand the consolidation of democracy did increase the political-party competition, on the other, it meant a quite modest advance in the construction of public and democratic sphere (Machado da Silva and Leite 2004). In this same meaning, Touraine (1995) claims the need for a definition of democracy that goes beyond a political regime: "Democracy is not just a regime. It is a political movement and it exists inasmuch as it finds a way of combining the limitation of state power, representation of conflicting or at least diversified interests and citizenship" (Touraine 1995: 268).

Moreover, the notion of civil democracy is strongly embedded in the ideas of citizenship and rule-of-law. Holston and Appadurai (1999:1) describe citizenship as a concept that evolved as part of the nation-state territorial formation to become the "identity which

[22] Caldeira and Holston explain that their use of "civil" is meant to specify "the sphere of rights, practices and values that concern liberty, both negative and positive, and the justice as the mean to all other rights"(1999:693).

subordinates all other identities – of religion, estate, family, gender, ethnicity, region and the like – to its framework of a uniform body of law". Thereby, citizenship can work to dismantle "local hierarchies, statuses, and privileges in favor of national jurisdiction and contractual relations based in principle on an equality of rights" (op. cit.). The rule-of-law would be then the way through which this equality of rights can be achieved in practice since it must work to guarantee that all citizens have effective access to the same rights. In this point the work of Pinheiro (2000) will also assist us to understand the practical implications of the rule-of-law in Brazil, which will be closely examined in chapter six.

4.2.3 Social movements and citizen claims

The sociology of the social movements theory is a large and diverse thematic area and difficult to synthesize in a few words. It is, however, necessary to briefly identify the current of thought from which my analytical tools have been selected. Roche explains, "sociologists of various theoretical persuasions have reasonably analyzed old and more recently new social movements in terms of historical development of citizenship" (1995:180). Indeed, the formation of social movements is intimately related to the expansion of contemporary ideas of citizenship. In the case of Vila Autódromo, their resistance against removal and pursuit for habitation rights has not been limited to this sphere; according to them, their resistance is above all, against the social and spatial exclusion that favela communities experience in Rio de Janeiro. This identification with the "excluded" has lead the community to establish partnerships with several organizations and communities fighting for the right of the poor and right to the city.

Such sense of identity and interests is fundamental to the formation of a social movement. According to Scott (1990), social movements can be defined as "…a collective actor constituted by individuals who *understand themselves* to have *shared interests* [and partially] a *common identity*…distinguished from other collective actors in that it has mass mobilization as its prime source of social sanction and power" (Scott 1990). This definition could ultimately be traced back to the works of Tilly (1978) on the building of a social movement theory. Known as the 'Political process' perspective, he contextualizes the rise of social movements to a broader political process, defining it as "an organized, sustained, self-conscious challenge which implies shared identity among participants (Tilly 1984:303 in: Diani 1992:5).

What's more, the strong social stratification that characterizes the society and the use of space in Rio de Janeiro adds meanings of class struggle to their case, in addition, the dispute for their land by private capital brings forward the contrasts between rich and poor. Regarding this point I borrow the definition of Scott on class resistance:

> I might claim that class resistance includes any act(s) by member(s) of a subordinate class that is or are intended either to mitigate or deny claims (for example, rents, taxes, prestige) made on that class by super ordinate classes (for example, landlords, large farmers, the state) or to advance its own claims (for example, work, land, charity, respect) vis-à-vis those super ordinate classes.
>
> (Scott 1985:290)

This resistance gains its meaning at the local sphere, because though macro representations may affect local practices, it is only in specific contexts that they can be understood, "that is, they are grounded in the meanings accorded them through the ongoing life-experiences and dilemmas of men and women" (Long 1992: 6-7).

With this perspective in mind, I have also based my analysis of the association's network (partners and collaborators) on the works of Cardoso (1992) and Machado da Silva e Leite (2004). Both sources draw their reflections from the experiences of community-based organizations, more specifically, residents' associations in favelas. The intimacy with the local sphere common to these organizations is according to them, their greatest strength. Although they are also in risk of becoming detached from its base, the local nature of their organizations provides the ideal structure for the renovation of leaderships in a way that attends present popular demands (Cardoso 1992).

Often described as *movimentos populares* in Brazil, grassroots movements embody the struggle for the establishment of a civil democracy and may also be strong "indicators of a society beginning to express its interests spontaneously" (Cardoso 1992: 291). They have provided a base for disadvantaged sectors of society to militate for their demands and have created new political arenas, becoming critical interlocutors between society and state apparatus. In an uncivil democracy, they serve as evidence for the need of new forms of political representation, being able to "bypass traditional mechanisms of political cooptation" (Cardoso 1992: 292).

Citizen claims

As I got more acquainted with the case of Vila Autódromo and the way the City Hall sustains the decision of eviction while lacking legal grounds to do so, I questioned what kind

of validation they used to justify this policy. If we try to analyze their dispute only by the legal point-of-view, we won't be able to find grounds that sustain such a decision. So how could the City Hall bypass the other political-administrative organs without being held to account? The four main arguments used by City Hall's administrations during the last decades are based in the criminalization of Vila Autódromo. When its residents are not considered worthy of the same rights as the other citizens and the favelas are seen as the locus of criminals, how could they demand to have access to the same legislation?

In order to understand how the discrimination of these communities relates to our case I intend to borrow the analysis drawn by Pearlman (2010) based on the results attained by forty years of research of Rio's favelas. In her first publication, *The myth of marginality* (1977), she intended to debunk the dominant idea of *marginality*, an extremely powerful ideology in Brazil in that time. Marginality, she explains, was used as moralistic, victim-blaming narrative that had widespread acceptance in all levels of society (2010:150); it held the poor responsible for their own condition as a consequence of living a life outside the "margins" of society. As approaching marginality as a myth, she intended to show that these were constructed social conceptions against the poor, which worked to justify the maintenance of a excluding social system. In another others, she intended to show that the poor were not *marginals* but marginalized by this discourse, which in turn, fueled a set of public policies that contributed to reproduce of their conditions. She explains that since then "the concept of marginality has been debunked, deconstructed, dismissed, and in turn, rediscovered and reconstructed over the past decades" (2010:149), now the focus was redirected to the social structures that marginalize the poor instead of the individuals themselves.

Since the democratic opening in Brazil in the mid 1980's, the many components of marginality have reappeared, but now in line with the current analytical discourse: *social exclusion, otherness, capabilities deprivation, vulnerabilities, livelihoods and assets, lack of voice, citizenship claims and rights*. These concepts and ideas are generally sympathetic to the urban poor and "place the blame for intergenerational and persistent poverty on the underlying structures of the state and society rather than on deficiencies and deficits of the poor" (2010:152). Considering the focus and nature of this case study, I will be focusing mostly on the concept of *citizenship claims and rights.*

The claims for citizenship carry inbuilt the notion of exclusion from the city, of not being counted as a citizen. The results of Pearlman's last research confirm that favelas are in

fact "punitively stigmatized spaces" and she adds that interviews with favela dwellers showed that the most mentioned basis of discrimination was not racism but *favela-ism*[23] (2010:153). According to the interviewees, the fact of living in a favela had more influence in daily social settings than race, color, class or gender. The stigma of being a social problem that has accompanied the favelas since its genesis is so embedded in peoples' minds that it continues to produce and reproduce a view of its residents as a social treaty despite any opposed evidence (Pearlman 2010). Such discrimination has also affected the way public policies in favelas are viewed by the general society, making it harder for communities such as Vila Autódromo to gain popular support against the abuses of the City Hall. It is in this context that the association makes its claims for citizenship and the protection of their rights.

[23] I.e., being from a favela.

5. An extended dispute

5.1 The history of Vila Autódromo

5.1.1Urban expansion in Barra da Tijuca

The coast stripe of the lowlands of Jacarepaguá, today known as Barra da Tijuca, was kept mainly unchanged since the first colonizers arrived. Between lakes and wetlands, the sandy terrain was never suitable for planting or raising livestock. The land was first given to Estácio de Sá, to be administrated as part of the Captaincy [24] of Rio de Janeiro in 1567. The Portuguese officer had the mission to expel the French invaders and establish permanent Portuguese occupation in the region, both of which he accomplished. During the following years, the lands of Barra were passed through inheritance to his descendants, until 1667 when the land was donated to the Benedictine Order[25]. For more than two centuries the monks exploited or leased their property, but in 1891, when facing bankruptcy, the land was passed to the Bank of Credit as payment of debts (Coroacy 1988).

In 1900, the area was divided and sold to four companies, which have commercialized them during the XX century although still maintaining the characteristic extensive properties. This has in part contributed to the slow occupation process of the area when compared to the rest of Rio. Land concentration in Barra is so perseverant that in 1994, four companies possessed 12,36 km^2 of the land still available for construction in Barra da Tijuca (Fridman 1994:15 in: Da Silva 2005:16).

Table 1: Property concentration in Barra

Owner	Company	Area (km^2)
Tjong Aiong Oei	Emp. Saneadora Territorial e Agrícola S.A	7,0
-	Carvalho Hosken	3,0
Irmãos Ramos	-	1,0
-	Drault Ernani	0,8
-	Emp. de Desenv. e Engenharia	0,56
Several real estate investors	-	2,5
Total	-	14,86

(Source: Da Silva 2005:16) *

[24] Administrative regions conceded by the Portuguese crown to members of court were responsible to keep the territorial occupation.

[25] Benedictine, member of the Order of Saint Benedict (O.S.B.), the confederated congregations of monks and lay brothers who follow the rule of life of St. Benedict (c. 480–c. 547) and who are descendants of the traditional monasticism of the early medieval centuries in Italy and Gaul. The Benedictines, strictly speaking, do not constitute a single religious order because each monastery is autonomous (Britannica).

A few and scattered vacation homes were built along the coastline from the 1930´s decade awards, when small parts of the area were subdivided into lots and sold[26]. The access to them improved in 1939 with the construction of the first bridge over the lake. Nevertheless, the access to Barra[27] was still difficult because the area is separated from the south and east zones of Rio by two large mountain chains, whose peaks reach over one thousand meters high. Hence the construction of paved roads connecting the area to the rest of the town during the XX century defined the time and location of the first settlements in Barra (Abreu 1987).

The new real estate frontier of the town would only be opened in Barra after the year 1970. In a short film dated from the same year[28], when the new city plan for Rio was presented, Barra was chosen to stage the next step in the city expansion, highlighting the physical characteristics of its landscape and its "natural vocation" to progress and modernism.

Figure 1. Barra da Tijuca in the 1960´s decade. Unknown. Source: Skyscraper city

Figure 2. Barra da Tijuca today. Source: RCVB

[26] These pioneer allotments are today two sub-neighborhoods in Barra da Tijuca: Jardim Oceânico and Tijucamar.

[27] Residents of Rio usually refer to *Barra da Tijuca* by the short name of *Barra*.

[28] The film was entitled "The city grows to Barra" and the project was designed by city planner Lúcio Costa and architect Oscar Niemeyer (the same that projected the capital city of Brasilia) as requested by the then Governor of Rio Francisco Negrao de Lima.

Figure 3. Part of Barra da Tijuca and Tijuca Lake in 1955
Source: SMAC – Secretaria Municipal do Meio Ambiente

Figure 4. Part of Barra da Tijuca and Tijuca Lake in 1999
Source: SMAC – Secretaria Mumicipal do Meio Ambiente

The project was based on the modernist developmental wave that reached Brazil in the mid1950's. In terms of architectural features, the area resembles much more the city of Miami in the USA than Rio itself. The highways are wide with long straight sections where residential and commercial complexes were built in the form of islands. Since the highway *Lagoa-Barra* was built in the decade of 1980, urbanization increased intensely and it became, as planned, the largest and fastest growing area in Rio[29].

[29] At this point it is important to explain the difference between Barra da Tijuca - the neighborhood and Barra da Tijuca - the administrative region. The administrative region includes the neighborhoods of: Barra da Tijuca, Joá

Barra is a somewhat unique neighborhood of Rio. Firstly, the modernist use of urban space makes its appearance contrast with the rest of the town. Barra resembles more cities like Orlando or Miami (FL) than Rio. Some of its closed condominiums comprise over 5000 residents and a set of services and commerce establishments within them. Guarded gates control the entry and exit of pedestrians and motor vehicles. Along Barra's large avenues you can find dozens of commercial complexes, office complexes, large shopping malls, high tech medical services complexes and imported cars' shops. This characteristic "Barra way of life" as it is called, not accidently makes reference to the "American way of life". Most of Barra's commercial establishments and office complexes in Barra have English names such as: Barra World, Barra Shopping, New York City Center, Barra Square, Downtown, etc.

Furthermore, Barra's population has increased from 174.353 in 2000 to 300.823 in 2010 and its HDI=0,959 (Human Development Index) surpass the world ranking's leader, Norway (HDI=0,943). In her article about the differences between the guidelines of the City plan and process of urban expansion of Barra da Tijuca, Gomes da Silva (2004) states that:

> It was not intended to create areas of segregation, but to develop the region for all layers of the population, unlike what had happened in the rest of the city of Rio de Janeiro. However, the performance of real estate agents (read the private actors involved in construction of urban space: large-capital real estate, which includes construction companies, property developers and real estate agents) contributed effectively to make Barra da Tijuca into an area for a privileged middle class, excluding the lower strata of the population. This created a stereotype for the Barra da Tijuca as a place for emerging (classes), but with a negative connotation, and as there was and there are no housing projects that benefit the lower classes, the slums were born as an alternative housing to low-income classes. [30] *

Vila Autódromo is located in the outskirts of Barra in the intercession between Avenue Abelardo Bueno and Avenue Salvador Allende (map 3). Until the beginning of the 1990's this part of the neighborhood placed behind the lakes hardly suffered any change. Besides the racetrack and the Center of Conventions of Rio, Rio Centro, most of the properties remained

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Itanhangá, Camorim, Vargem pequena, Vargem Grande, Recreio dos Bandeirantes, Grumari and extends for 165,59Km^2. The neighborhood of Barra da Tijuca corresponds to about 1/5 of this area and is located mostly in the cost stripe of the area. The fact that these neighborhoods are within the administrative region of the same name helps to promote investments in these areas. It is common to see advertisements of real estate investments in Barra when in reality the project is placed in one of its adjacent neighborhoods. This kind of practice contributed to an expansion of the area that people perceive as Barra since the borders between the neighborhoods are not easy to indentify. In this way, the lands available for urban expansion in the administrative region of Barra da Tijuca give continuity to the process of urban expansion in Rio. I will make use of both spatial cuts; however, I will reserve the use of the name "Barra da Tijuca" to refer to the administrative area and "Barra" when referring to the neighborhood. The reason for this is first to avoid repetitive long descriptions and secondly because most *cariocas* do so.

[30] My translation from Portuguese. In the following all my translations from Portuguese will be marked with an asterisk (*).

unoccupied. But as available land in Barra's urban core became scarcer, real estate speculation continued to move towards the west resulting in a handful of new constructions along the Avenue Abelardo Bueno, which coincides with the first attempt of removal of Vila Autódromo in 1993. Since then were built along this avenue: residential condos, office complexes, the HSBC Arena[31], the Maria Lenk Aquatic Park[32], Barra Velodrome[33] and the SARAH Hospital[34]. On the other side of the community, by the Avenue Salvador Allende, the City of Rock [35] was inaugurated in 2011 and it is already possible to see the preparation of the ground for the Olympic Village[36]. In summary, what used to be a fairly unoccupied area became in less than 20 years the center of mega-event structures in Rio.

[31] HSBC Arena is the first and only multipurpose space of international standards in Brazil. It was built for the Pan American Olympic Games 2007.

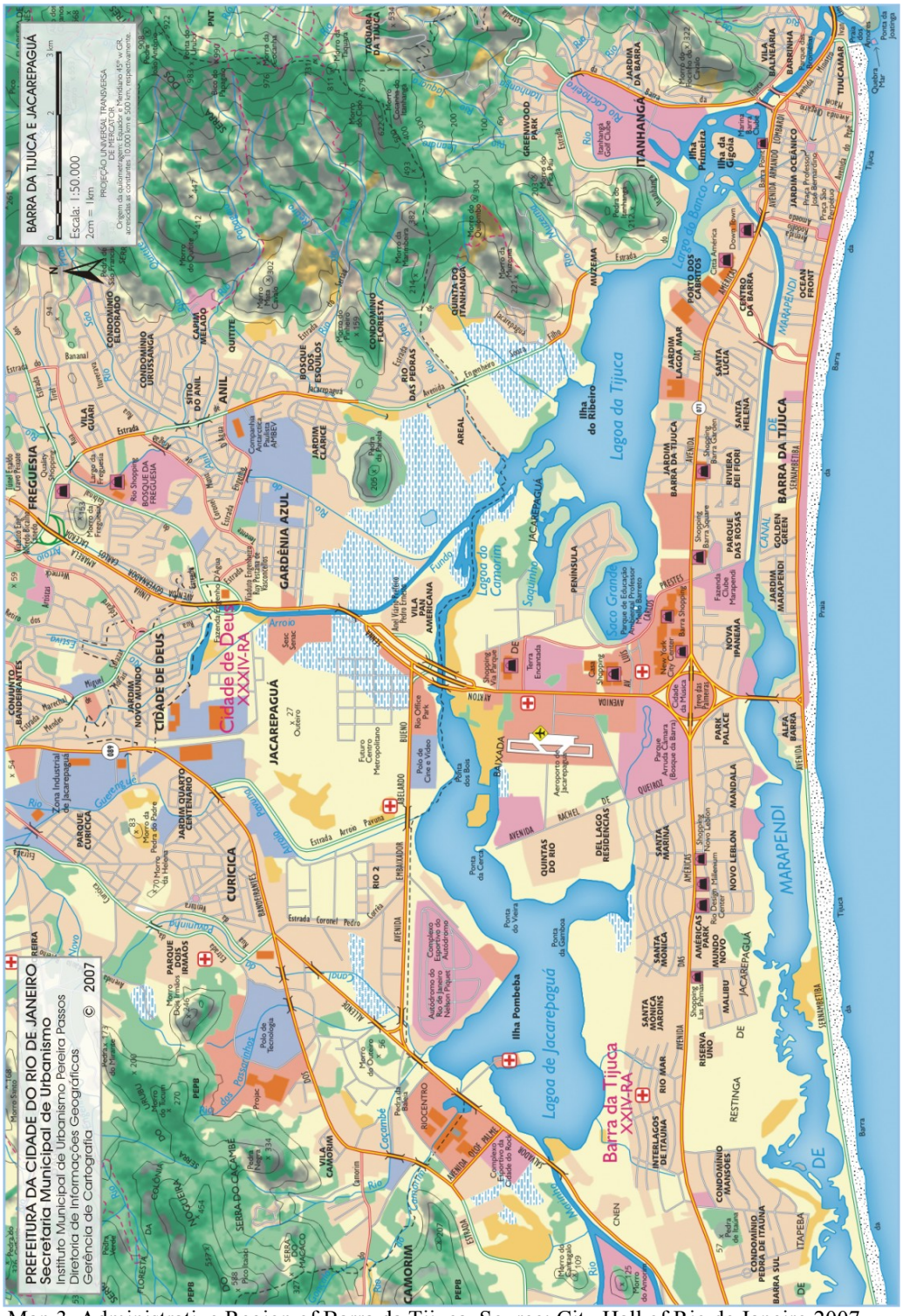
[32] Aquatic Park built for the Pan American Olympic games 2007.

[33] Also built for the Pan American Olympic games 2007.

[34] SARAH is a network of Centers of neurosciences and neuro-rehabilitation considered medical reference in Brazil. The unit in Rio stands out both for its impressing 52.000 m² of constructed area as for its striking architectural lines.

[35] Space built to host events of great scale in Rio. It is also called "athletes Park" and it will function as a space of public utility when not hosting events. (Website) www.cidadeolimipica.com, several accesses.

[36] The infra structure will be provided by the City Hall and the contractor *Carvalho Hosken* will be responsible to deliver forty buildings with a total of 3.500 apartments that will host the athletes during the event. After the Olympic Games 2016 the apartments will be sold by the contractor.



Map 3. Administrative Region of Barra da Tijuca. Source: City Hall of Rio de Janeiro 2007

5.1.2The beginning of Vila Autódromo

The beginning of Vila Autódromo coincides with the beginning of the urban expansion in Barra. By this time, the growth of the urban grid was mostly concentrated in the lands along the main avenues by the coast stripe. The lands behind the lakes Jacarepaguá and Tijuca were, however, kept mostly rural. The new construction in Barra attracted a great number of workers, mostly from the North Zone of town, who had to commute long distances everyday, sometimes being unable to return home because there were no buses after working hours. The solution found by some was to occupy a piece of land in the area and bring their families closer to them. The oldest residents of the community declare to have established themselves in 1967 by the lake Jacarepaguá, within the property of the International Racetrack Nelson Piquet; more precisely, between the track and the lake[37].

Figure 5. The International Racetrack Nelson Piquet in 1960's. Source: Sky Scrapercity

Some of the oldest dwellers report that a few fisherman families were already living by the lake before their arrival, when the area was even more isolated. The community was then known by the name of Via Cinco sharing the same name of the closest road to their homes and it is said that they lived off their catch (Da Silva 2005). One of the oldest residents told me that many of them had bought shacks from the fisherman that used to live there

[37] Racetrack in Portuguese is *Autódromo,* which originated their name. *Vila* used to be a Portuguese title for an administrative unit but nowadays its common meaning is a group of houses built in a single property, usually with one common entrance.

before. When they arrived, there was nothing besides these small and precarious shacks, there was no electricity, no water or sewage installations and they had to walk long stretches to any kind of transportation. Unfortunately, there are no documents or evidence to prove their story and the archives of the prefecture of Rio de Janeiro declare that the community was established in 1986[38], based on air photographs taken during the period of 1975 to 2010. The historical survey report developed by the Institute Pereira Passos (IPP) to the Prefecture states that:

> The occupation began in 1986 with the arrival of people from nearby surroundings who invaded a vacant lot that borders the lake Jacarepaguá and the Autódromo Nelson Piquet. With the creation of the Residents Association in 1987, the area was demarcated in lots in order to be urbanized in the future. Each one had to pay for the occupation and register on R.A. (settlement registration). Based on helicopter photos of 1990 and field research conducted in 1991: approximately 130 households of brickwork and the possibility of future expansion into the Avenue Abelardo Bueno. *
>
> (IPP – Armazém de Dados)

Nonetheless, disputes between the municipality and state administrations about the ownership of the land where the community is located make it difficult to trace its history from an official point of view. The area was first expropriated by the then Guanabara state in 1972 for the construction of the International Racetrack Nelson Piquet, becoming then public land. When the Guanabara state[39] lost it position of neutral state and capital of Brazil, it was re-denominated as Municipality of Rio de Janeiro and set under the administration of the Rio de Janeiro state[40].

This administrative fusion raised long lasting disputes about the ownership of the racetrack[41], which eventually was conceded to the state. They would be responsible for works of infrastructure and maintenance while the administration would remain with the City's authorities. However, after some years suffering from the lack of funds that led to an ultimate abandonment of the track, the City Hall (administration of mayor César Maia) took over in 1994 with a project of total renovation, which brought important automobilist events back to

[38] As a matter of fact, the history of many favelas in Rio can be difficult to trace, especially the ones that began far from urban cores. The lack of formal documentation often results in different and sometimes conflicting reports from the population and the administrative authorities.

[39] Former designation for the area that is Rio City nowadays.

[40] See section 2.2

[41] Rio's Prefecture argued that since they had done all the necessary investments, they should be granted the rights over it. From 1976 the prefecture took over the administration of the racetrack but in 1986 a judicial court decided the dispute in favor of the state.

Rio[42]. The period lasted until the year 2000 when the City Hall stopped investments and cancelled two important races. The track went into a new period of decadency and when Rio applied to host the 2007 Pan American Olympic Games, the City Hall considered to remove it and give place to new sports structures.

Since Vila Autódromo is located inside the racetrack property, their land also belonged legally to the state of Rio de Janeiro, but it in practice has been administrated by the City Hall. The history of the racetrack and of the community Vila Autódromo has been intertwined along the years. In fact, the Brazilian Confederation of Motorsport (CBA) has also resisted the removal of the racetrack through legal actions moved by the Public prosecution's office. They have given mutual support to the cause of the community declaring to be victims of the same real estate pressure for the land (CBA 2011).

5.1.3An orderly and pacific community since 1967

Since the 1970's the community grew with the arrival of new residents that slowly transformed their wood shacks into brick houses and together worked to improve their common area. They formed a residents' association in 1986, following the example of other communities in town, and built a small house where the office works. The current president of the residents' association in Vila Autódromo, Mr. Altair Guimarães, explained that it was common practice to register a residents' association as a means of legitimizing the formation of a new community. Together, they have fixed the streets that although not paved, are wide, clean and in good conditions. As Mr. Altair stressed, they have only one alley in the community, which was opened not long ago to facilitate the access of residents to the main street. They have built their own small-scale sewage treatment (septic tanks) so their waste wouldn't have to go straight to the lake. They have also built the office of the association in a joint effort. I have been in many favelas in my life, so the comparison was inevitable to me. Although I understand that favelas can be radically different from each other and many of them do have basic infrastructure and services, the sense of "management" in Vila Autódromo was surprising.

In my second visit to Vila Autódromo, I arrived while Mr. Altair was mounting a second billboard in one of the two main entrances of the community. It was only four days left for *Rock in Rio 2011* to begin and they wanted to use the opportunity to "present the

[42] Formula Indy from 1996 to 1999, Motorcycle International races and many other national competitions.

community" to the many Brazilian and foreign tourists that would cross that road to While he proudly showed me the billboard, he said: "we need all the support we can get and if people understand that we are good, working citizens and how long we have been here I don't believe that they would support the government against us." In the board there was an air-view picture of the community (the same showing in figure 6) and written in three languages – Portuguese, English and Spanish – stood: "AMPAVA[43] - Vila Autódromo – Welcome – A peaceful and orderly community since 1967". On the footnote stood their address: Autódromo´s Street, postcode 22775-080. The address was printed in the same fashion as the plates installed by the City's administration in "non-favela" neighborhoods.

Vila Autódromo seems to be indeed a peaceful and orderly community. They have never had problems with drug traffic or militias, they have low rates of robbery and violence registered within the community, and according to the residents even cases of indirect stealing are rare. During the association meetings they often stressed how safe they felt in the community, praising its pacific character. In fact, all the residents I interviewed were unanimous in this aspect – safety was the main reason why they liked to live there. To understand why, we have to know that many of today's residents have come from other favelas where they either experienced violence or know people that did. Quite a few residents arrived in the beginning of the 1980's when the favela *Cardoso Fontes* was removed and the City Hall resettled part of the population in Vila Autódromo. They have also divided the area into lots, preparing the community to receive an urbanization project in the future, which the community still awaits (the demarcation of lots and streets contrasts with most favelas in Rio where alleys and narrow passages make the access of cars more difficult and challenge urbanization projects). Mr. Altair affirms that the only public service provided by the City administration is the waste collection, but still they are obliged to pay taxes for their houses. He also told me that political candidates built the only two communal spaces, the football field and the playground, in exchange for votes. Despite of the fact that he disapproved the idea and denied the installation of billboards with political propaganda, he felt out of his right to deprive the community from these spaces.

The community is divided in 198 lots of which 56 are located within the area of environmental protection of the lake, that is, less than 25 meters from the lake banks. Besides residential lots, there are four units with car shops, the office for the Independent league of motorcyclists of Rio de Janeiro, a school for racecar pilots, the residents' association office,

[43] AMPVA it is an acronym for Association of Residents and Fisherman of Vila Autódromo.

the communal radio, one church, one locksmith, one bar, three for rental houses (less than 2% of the total), and three empty lots[44]. I have also observed several informal commercial activities in small scale happening in the residential lots. These usually happen inside the houses and provide services for the neighbors such as snack bars, beauty shops, bakeries, etc. In addition, I counted four different churches.

Figure 6. Aerial view of Vila Autódromo and the racetrack to the right
Source: Picture donated by anonymous to the Residents' association in 2009

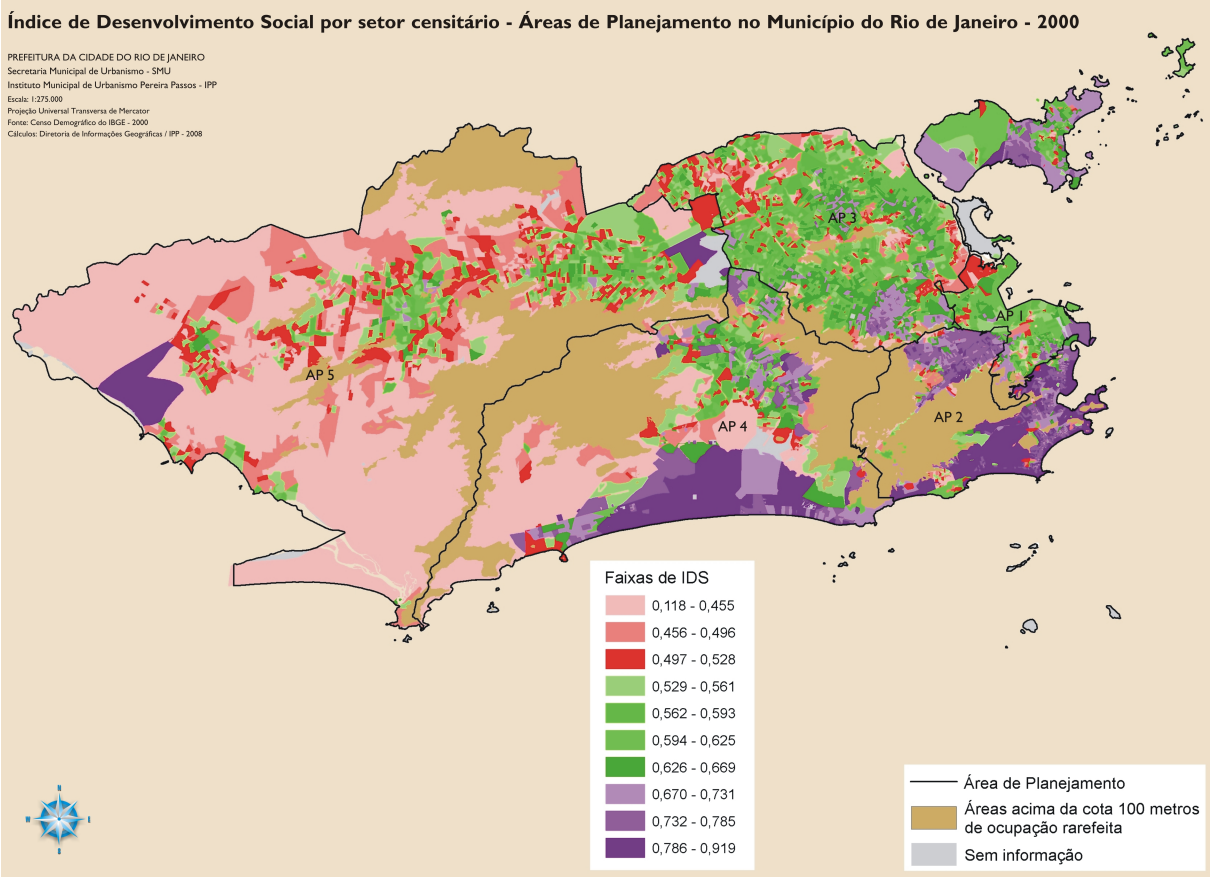
Concerning the construction standard of the houses, we can observe a reasonable variation. The houses located in the stripe of the lake banks present a higher building standard than those by the road. The great majority is made of bricks with very few exceptions for wooden shacks. The ITERJ (2000 in: Da Silva 2005) made an analysis of house building standards in order to identify the level of income in households:

- Low quality of construction: 98 houses, representing 53% of the total.
- Medium quality: 39 units, approximately 21%.

[44] This data is provided by the Land and Cartography Institute of the state of Rio de Janeiro (ITERJ 2000 in: Da Silva 2005)

- Medium-high standard: 21 units, or 11%.
- High standard: 28 unities, representing 14%.

The high and medium standard of some houses have given ground to the argument that the residents of Vila Autódromo are in fact not poor but middle class families who have taken advantage of the real estate speculation in the area. I am going to take a closer look at this point below.



Map 4. The Social development index of Rio de Janeiro City. Source: (IPP) Armazém de Dados

According to the Social Development Index (SDI) produced by the City Hall, Vila Autódromo is found in the bottom section, between 0,118 and 0,455 (map 4). We can also observe that the community is located within the area with the highest index of social development (different shades of purple and dark green representing variations from 0,919 to 0,626, however, not far from the border to the where the lowest sections appear (different shades of red). We can also notice that the region of Barra da Tijuca presents a highly homogeneous occupation in terms of social classes. When in comparison to the most traditional high-income neighborhoods in south Zone (like Ipanema, Copacabana and Leblon) Barra da Tijuca presents even less variation in the SDI. An interesting observation in this

matter is that when the City Hall proposed to move the community less than 2 kilometers away from their current location (October, 2011), this new site was situated outside of the "purple" area, transferred into the borders of the lowest index where many other favelas are found.

5.2 The dispute from 1993 to 2007

5.2.1 First round

The properties of Vila Autódromo were registered in the name of the state of Rio de Janeiro by 1986 after winning the cause against the City Hall of Rio[45]. The dispute between Vila Autódromo and the Prefecture of Rio de Janeiro for the land began in 1993 when the City Hall filed a Public Civil Lawsuit[46] requesting the reintegration of possession of the racetrack area. At this point I will be borrowing once more from the historic survey made by Da Silva (2005). The community was represented by 198 resident families that received the support of the government of the state of Rio de Janeiro represented by the State Department of Land Affairs (SEAF). The Governor of Rio de Janeiro, Leonel Brizola, initiated then an action of land regularization registering 84 *termos de concessão de uso*, a document that granted the families the right to reside and make use of the land for a period of 49 years, renewable for 99 years. Because these are legally, public lands, the community could not receive a final property ownership title, but this measure did prevent the eviction of Vila Autódromo and strengthen their resistance in the dispute with the City Hall. Without this measure the residents would not have been able to resist the legal action of the City's administration. Because the land is public, laws applicable to *usucapião* do not cover them. *Usucapião* is a term used to identify land occupation established pacifically, continuously and without opposition in unoccupied land for a period of 5 to 10 years, depending on the case.[47] The term refers to adverse possession[48] in English. However, the Brazilian land law of *usucapião* applies only to private land.[49]

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[45] Registers n. 40.415, 47.121, 145.468 e 145.469 in the Notary's office from *the 9° Ofício de RGI da Capital*.

[46] Process nº 93.001.078414-7 at 4ª *Vara da Fazenda Pública da Capital*.

[47] Based on the article 183 of the Federal Constitution and articles 9º, 10º, 11º, 12º, 13º e 14º from the General guidelines of urban policies (Cities Statute, *Estatuto das Cidades*). In the new Civil Code of 2003 the minimum time to apply for property by *usucapião* dropped from 20 to 15 years, 10 years in special cases when the land is used for habitation and 5 years if the occupant does not have any other property.

[48] "Adverse possession, in Anglo-American property law, holding of property under some claim of right with the knowledge and against the will of one who has a superior ownership interest in the property. Its legal

5.2.2 Second Round

Since the area they occupy is part of the land belonging to the racetrack and this belongs to the state and not to the City Hall, the community could theoretically rest their rights in this document for the next 40 years starting from 1994 (da Silva 2005). But, a new lawsuit was initiated by the City Hall at the same time as these events took place, this time based on the argument of environmental damages to the lake Jacarepaguá. The timing for the argumentation was indeed perfect since the Rio Summit[50] had happened the year before (1992) a few meters from Vila Autódromo, at Rio's Convention Center (Rio Centro). By this time, the Jacarepaguá Lake already presented signs of pollution, which was pointed out during the convention. The City Hall had in its support the Public Defense represented by the Environmental protection team and the Heritage Community of the Ombudsman of Rio de Janeiro. Vila Autódromo counted again with the support of the state of Rio de Janeiro's Government represented by the ITERJ (as the previous case) and this time also by SERLA - State Superintendence of Rivers and Lakes since the case involved the environmental protection of the lake.

The prosecutors made use of three main arguments for Vila Autódromo's removal:

- Some residents had embanked parts of the lake and built over it also trespassing the 25 meters distance from the water line as defined by building regulations in Brazil.
- Constructions did not follow the regulations determined in the master plan for Barra both in terms of standard and density of houses.
- Vila Autódromo was formed mainly by middle class individuals, which had taken advantage of land speculation in the area and not, as they presented themselves, a low-income community that had no other living alternative.

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significance is traced back to the English common-law concept known as seisin, a possession of land by one who owns the property at least for the period of his life, having a complete right to possession of the property as against all others. The possession by any other under some claim of right to the land was known as disseisin. One who was disseised of his property could take the matter to the king's court through a legal action known as the assize of novel disseisin. If the land held by a disseisor was claimed by an heir of the original owner in seisin, the heir could bring a similar legal action known as the assize of mort d'ancestor. After the 17th century more expeditious legal actions were developed. In the United States, disseisin developed as the concept of adverse possession. Statutes of limitation in most of the U.S. states set time limits within which an owner can bring an action for possession, after which time an adverse possessor acquires a legal title to the land". (Britannica Academic Edition 2012)

[49] Brazilian New Civil Code from 2003, Chapter II, Section I, articles 1.238-1.244 covers the terms for rights of *usucapião.*

[50] United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) Rio de Janeiro, 3-14 June 1992.

The counterarguments presented by Vila Autódromo through the public defenders' state office were:

- Many of the closed condos, shopping malls and even hospitals had as practice to regularly shut their sewage treatment stations to save in energy bills. As so, how could they affirm that the pollution of the lake could be blamed on the community? Besides, Vila Autódromo had built a small scale, simple sewage treatment and was very eager to receive public urbanization works that would improve their environmental conditions. [51]
- Several other constructions in Barra financed by real estate investment had broken the guidelines of the Master plan for the neighborhood such as: building in areas of environmental protection; increasing the numbers of floors allowed in certain areas from 5 up until 15; and closing the public access to streets as part of the closed-condo areas. As Vila Autódromo, they argued, was the product of their own life struggle to build decent residences financed only by their low wages, they declared to be persecuted by the construction companies that were expanding real estate development from Barra to their area. As evidence, they showed that the flyers of new projects that these companies were selling did not show the community in their drawings.
- Lastly, the defendants presented themselves as a community composed in great majority of low-income families (*comunidade carente*, poor community) a fact that was confirmed by the analysis made during the process.

Here I would like to make a short break in our time line to explain that this process had a sentence declared in February 16th, 2011. In summary, the Judge from the *4ª Vara da Fazenda*

[51] Regarding the urban occupation and consequent environmental problems, Silva (2006) declares: "The historic study of the urban occupation in the region of Barra da Tijuca, in Rio de Janeiro City, since the 70's, based on the urban project of the architect and urban designer Lucio Costa, reveals that the region appears as an iconic urban space for huge investments of public and private capital, thus, achieving important social economical development. Similarly to the urbanization process of innumerous localities in Brazilian cities … the guidelines to its urban expansion are based, especially, on the interests of huge real estate agencies, despite the absence of a region sewer system to collect and treat the domestic effluents, hence, contributing to emerge environmental problems and social-environmental conflicts that appear with environmental impacts, in this case, urban environmental impacts. Considered as the main obstacle to the sustainable development of Barra da Tijuca, the lack of sewer system results in: (i) environmental problems of water bodies pollution in the Lagunar Complex of Jacarepaguá Lowlands, specially in Lagoons Tijuca and Camorim; (ii) social-environmental conflicts in relation to the requirement for environmental sewage; (iii) urban environmental impacts that appears from the dynamics of the urban fabric production according to the interests of important real estate agencies in the Region of Barra da Tijuca".*

Pública da Capital[52] in Rio de Janeiro decided that the constructions found within the 25 meters of land stripe for protection of the lake should be demolished and its residents removed aiming at environmental recuperation of the area. The sentence, however, can be appealed and the protection buffer of 25 meters could be negotiated down to 12,5 meters. The lots sentenced represent 28 percent of the community (56 lots out of 198 total) and the decision did not imply the removal of Vila Autódromo.

5.2.3 Third Round

In the year of 2003 the community would face a new challenge. The city councilman Wagner Siqueira proposed a law that would allow the City Hall to transfer the Racetrack Nelson Piquet and its perimeter area (read Vila Autódromo's area) to a private enterprise justified by the need for private capital investment in preparation for the Pan American Olympic Games 2007. The community mobilized to declare the project of law unconstitutional. The association called the residents to demonstrate in front of the City Assembly and on the day that the project of law should be voted they occupied the galleries fighting to be heard by the council. The law was passed but the opposition requested that the votes would be recounted. The ITERJ proposed that the City Council could visit Vila Autódromo and see that they were indeed a poor community. In a new round, even though many of the aldermen had changed their votes, the law passed again.

However, the victory of the City Hall would last only a few days. With the announcement of the new law, the protest movement increased to such a level that the mayor, pressured by the opposition, decided to not endorse the law. Taking advantage of the momentum, the city councilmen in favor of Vila Autódromo proposed that they would vote a request made by the governor Leonel Brizola in 1995 that still awaited a decision. The then Governor of Rio de Janeiro had proposed that the City Hall would declare the area occupied by Vila Autódromo as "Area of Especial Social Interest". In January 4th, 2005 the proposal was endorsed sealing the victory of Vila Autódromo. This decision implies that the community cannot be removed for urbanistic reasons, in practice it means that the urbanistic standards set for the region cannot be applied to the community. This title would give Vila Autódromo a more comfortable position to negotiate with the City Hall in the next years.

[52] Judicial court in Rio City that processes cases involving public property.

5.3 Fourth round: the current dispute

5.3.1The announcement

On the same day that Rio was announced as the host city for the 2016 Olympic games, the mayor Eduardo Paes (2009-2012 term of office) announced the removal of 123 favelas. Among these was also Vila Autódromo. On October 2nd, 2009, Vila Autódromo was set to begin one more round in their struggle to keep their houses and their community, and once again, against the City Hall. As *Rio On Watch* (2011) reported and Mrs. Jane told me in one of the interviews, she got to know about it on the same way as everyone else, in a public declaration from the mayor on television. Eduardo Paes had been the sub-mayor of Barra da Tijuca during the first Cesar Maia administration, from 1993 to 1996. He was known for working for the regularization of urban occupation and was directly involved with the case of Vila Autódromo during these years. One of the residents declared that in 1993 the sub-mayor came with the demolition team to the entrance of the community threatening to demolish the houses that had already been marked by the SMH (Municipal housing office). This local man stood in front of the tractor and said that he would have to run over him first. The episode triggered a series of protests and the residents closed both entrances to the community for many days.

This time, as the mayor of Rio, Mr. Paes had once more decided to remove the community. In the end of 2010, the City Hall explained that the area would have to be made available for the Media Center and the Olympic Training Center. However, a few weeks later the planners had moved these centers downtown, to the old harbor zone. The community thought that this would mean that they could stay, but the City Hall administration said that the decision to remove them stood. The reason now, they said in June 2011, was that a security perimeter was needed around the racetrack, which the residents would be unable to cross during the games. The community did not accept this decision and the association began to mobilize the residents once more to negotiate with the City Hall. They were outraged with the way the mayor was dealing with such decisions: none of the favelas involved had been consulted or invited to participate in decisions referring to them. Instead, the public representatives of the City Hall kept making public declarations to the media as if all decisions had been already made and there was nothing left to discuss.

After the first declarations of removal and the consequent resistance of the community that appealed to the legal aspects of the process, the City Hall had attempted different

approaches. The secretary of habitation declared to be open to discussion with the community, but according to the leader of the association, it became clear after their first meeting that "there was no space for negotiation, he is just trying to force us to accept what they have already decided". The secretary did not consider the possibility for the community to stay, instead he wanted to discuss the terms in which they would leave. Vila Autódromo, on the other hand, did not consider leaving. "Our community is not available for negotiation", he says, "we want urbanization and not removal, and we will await the judicial decision".

5.3.2 Vila Autódromo's response

The Community, represented by the residents' association, kept the same discourse throughout the process: they would not move one foot out of the land before a court decision about the matter was given. They started to prepare actively for resistance in two main fields: triggering the public defenders' office and joining the leadership of several other favelas being threatened by removal. In the first plan they kept regular meetings with the public defenders, working to gather useful information about the community that could be used against the arguments of the City Hall for removal. They have promoted regular assemblies to inform and hear the residents, produced maps, made a community census, recorded meetings with government representatives, gathered pictures from spatial transformation happening around the community, etc. In summary, they have kept records in the form of film, pictures or documents that could be used to build their case and they worked to mobilize the community residents. In the second plan, they have worked to mobilize external support, or as they say, partners, which will be introduced in chapter six.

With the help from its partners, a report was produced by the public defense in 2010 and sent to the IOC (International Olympic Committee). The document was a denouncement of Rio's City Hall actions against Vila Autódromo stressing that even though there were no Olympic structures planned for the area, and despite the fact that they await a legal verdict, the City Hall planned to remove the community. It also described the long lasting process of dispute between the two. Lastly, it deconstructed one by one the arguments used by the City Hall, providing evidence that the same standard of occupation was not demanded from other constructions in Barra, when the properties belonged to high and middle class groups. It concluded accusing the City Hall of working to benefit real estate investors that would profit from a social homogeneous area increasing the values of their properties.

By the time I arrived in Rio for my field research, in the end of August 2011, the situation seemed to be heading for a final decision as the pressure from the City Hall increased. My first visit to Vila Autódromo was during one of their meetings to discuss the matter of removal with the residents. The leaders of the association explained that the City Hall was using every possible tool they had to weaken their power of resistance, which relied on the strategy of stand unanimously in the decision of waiting for a verdict and not give in to any of the attempts of the City Hall to "scare" them. This was the recurrent theme of the meeting: The City Hall makes it sound like everything is decided and there is nothing we can do about it. They spread rumors about a certain date to come and demolish the houses and about public housing projects designed for us somewhere else. That is their strategy to make people feel insecure, scared of losing their houses, and in the end, to lose everything because they refused to give their names when municipal agents came to enroll candidates for the new housing project. But if we can stand together in the purpose of not negotiating anything by fear or pressure and wait for the court to decide, the City Hall will have to eventually listen to us and hear our proposals.

5.3.3 The dispute intensifies

The deadlines set by the City Hall to start the construction of the Olympic Park approached and the pressure on the community grew more intense. Nevertheless, an official note released on August 19th 2011 would this time give the community new munitions: the winning project for the Olympic Park, designed by the British company Aecom[53], did not occupy the area of Vila Autódromo, making their removal irrelevant (Aecom).

The international competition for the General Urban Plan of the Rio 2016 Olympic Park[54] had been opened a few months before and this result made clear that it was structurally possible for the community to stay and not bother the project. In fact, the design shows the plans for the Park in 2016, 2018 and 2030 - showing how the Games structures will be made into a legacy for the city. In all three projections it is possible to see Vila Autódromo, which would receive urbanization works and be incorporated to the complex. But as the City Hall

[53] The winning project is available at the company's website: http://www.aecom.com/News/Sports/Winning+Vision+for+the+Rio+Olympics, accessed (03/03/2012)

[54] Public Announcement of the contest: http://concursoparqueolimpicorio2016.iabrj.org.br/, accessed (20/03/2012)

explained, “the first project is only conceptual, all the details are still going to be decided along the next months” and which still keeps the community in risk of removal[55].

Figure 7. Master Plan present by AECOM to Rio 2016 Olympic games: Vila Autódromo featuring on the left top. Source: AECOM

Only a few days after *O Globo*, one of the largest newspapers in Brazil and part of the *Organizações Globo*[56], released a front-page article entitled: “Minutes of public note provide removal of Vila Autódromo until 2013 for the construction of the Olympic Park” (O Globo, 04/10/2011)[57]. Once again, the news reached the community through the media. I had been in the association the day before when the reporter called Mr. Altair about the article that would be release the day after. Surprised by the news, he made a short declaration to O Globo affirming the position of the community to resist the removal and fight to stay. Instead, his declaration was quoted in the article as his personal choice, rating among many others, making it appear as the “community was divided” between staying or leaving. There were no references to the movement of resistance that they organize and no references to the public defender’s office’s opinion about the juridical aspect of the case.

During the next hours the public defender’s office and City councilman Eliomar Coelho (who was positioned in favor of Vila Autódromo) would contact him. Both affirmed that no decisions had been made in the justice department that could justify the note from the

[55] Rio’s City Hall has made a website to publish information and news about the 2016 Olympic Games: www.rio2016.com, several accesses.

[56] *Organizações Globo* is the largest media conglomerate in Brazil, and one of the four big media groups in Latin America (inaglobal, 2010)

[57] Electronic version of the article: http://oglobo.globo.com/rio/minuta-de-edital-preve-remocao-de-favela-vila-autodromo-ate-2013-para-obras-do-parque-olimpico-2744502, accessed (02/02/2012)

City Hall, a fact that the newspapers had left out. Mr. Altair told me that this was no surprise to him. Having been evicted twice during his 54 years of life, he was used to the way that the City Hall acts in removal policies, "this is the way they treat the poor". He said:

> …They work with psychological terror…these things in the newspapers, marking our houses to be demolished, spreading rumors in the community…. people start to panic, they can't sleep, they can't plan their future…it is almost like they make you think that anything is better than this indecision. *

In fact, the residents I talked with were basically divided into two groups: the ones that didn't accept to leave and would fight to stay; and the ones that wouldn't choose to leave but were so tired of the instability of their situation (now extending for 19 years since the first attempt of removal) that they wanted after a decision. One resident told me: "If we have to leave, we will, what can we do? But we can't continue to not know". None of the residents I spoke with or that spoke in the meetings had declared that they would like to move to the City Hall's housing project. The results of a census conducted by the leaders of the association in the community during 2011 confirmed this belief. The census gathered information on 200 families, of how long they have lived there, what kind of houses they had (the size and standard), how many residents there were in the lot and if they wanted to stay – from the 200 hundred households interviewed, only 3 would choose to leave. Still, in the O Globo article it said:

> There is no unanimity in the community on how to act. The president of the Association is against the removal…the security agent Jorge that lives in Vila Autódromo for twenty years has another opinion. He lives in a lot of 300m^2 where four houses were built and nine people live. According to him, all of them agree to move: "because of the dispute with the City Hall the community never received investments in infra structure. With the possibility of removal we feel insecure and don't know if we should invest in our houses". *
>
> (O Globo, 04/10/2011)

Such declaration clearly ignores the solid mobilization happening in the community against the removal, making it sound as if they were divided. The association's meetings happening regularly and around two hundred people had a very defined position: they wanted to stay.

5.3.4 Housing project *Parque Carioca*

Ignoring the fact that the winning project for the Olympic Park showed it to be possible for Vila Autódromo to stay, the City Hall invited the leaders of the association for a meeting the week after. The housing secretary confirmed the rumors that they had a housing project for the community, which he considered "would improve the living conditions of the

residents". The proposal had already been published in the newspaper (once again, the communication of the City Hall with Vila Autódromo happens through the media), and it consisted of a property and conceptual plan. They wanted to inform the association that they would visit the community during the coming week to distribute invitations to a formal presentation of the housing project to the residents. A date would be set and their plan was to explain the project to the people and take them to see the property. Mr. Altair and the group accompanying him were unanimous to say that they could not stop them from going but they were against any kind of removal proposal and as long as the community wished to stay they would fight for it, after all the justice hadn't given their verdict yet. For them, Mr. Altair declared, it was a confirmation that the community had to leave because it is located in an area of high interest to the real estate market.

The prefecture opened a contest for contractors to present a housing project for Vila Autódromo. The project, named Parque Carioca, would be built in a property located one kilometer away from the community, which the City Hall proudly stated being according to the Municipal Laws[58]. What was not mentioned, on the other hand, was that the same law institutes that no low-income communities should be removed unless the physical conditions of the area occupied impose risk of life to its inhabitants. Still, the City Hall would pay over 10 million dollars for the land and the chosen contractor would build and partially finance the new apartments. In exchange, they would receive right over the land where Vila Autódromo is now (which is not part of the Olympic park) plus license to build residential condominiums and hotels. The association set an emergency meeting to discuss the situation before the visit of the secretary.

I was present in this meeting that happened on October 9th 2011. The community gathered to hear about the meeting the association had with the City Hall. They brought a report of the plans for the locality and reinforced their position of resistance. Warning the residents against trusting the "promises made in a year of election", they reminded them of the cases of other communities that were left with unfinished proposals after being removed. They reaffirmed their right to live there, since there is no public project to occupy the area. Besides, several residents expressed that it was not just about selling or exchanging their properties but also that Vila Autódromo is their home, it is their project of life, where they have raised their children and where they can live peacefully, and this could taken away by

[58] The Municipal Law, Title VI (Municipal Policies), Chapter V (Urban Policies) states conditions for removal of favelas in Section II (urban development) Sub-section I (about Precepts and Instruments) article 429, VI Paragraph (Lei Orgânica do Município do Rio de Janeiro).

the real estate market. In summary, the reasons expressed in the meeting to not accept the housing project were:

- The winning project does not require the removal of Vila Autódromo and being so, the reasons for the removal are becoming increasingly clear to be for the benefit of private capital (contractors and real estate companies in Barra da Tijuca).
- They are not an illegal community; they possess valid documentation for their houses and even pay taxes for their properties.
- Many of the families have houses bigger than the 40m2 of the apartments offered and many have backyards that they share with their families (when one lot is occupied by several houses of the same family).
- Several residents have a mixed residence where they maintain some kind of business to help in their income, besides there are churches and commercial establishments that could not be taken into the condo.
- They all know of similar projects that required a social rent. After all, a condominium that has a swimming pool, recreational area and daycare will be maintained how? They fear monthly payments might become too costly for them.
- They fear that the social network built along the past 30 years will be lost in the apartments, including the sense of peace and quiet that they enjoy now.
- They don't trust the promises of the City Hall since they are familiar with the story of other communities left unfinished or made with extremely bad quality materials.
- To accept would mean that the community agrees with the idea that they are too ugly and poor for their surroundings and add to their own humiliation. Besides, it would be to deny their belief in their rights to the city and to the land, as workers.

A strategy to receive the secretary was organized and when the day arrived the residents had prepared big banners stating: "We don't want your project, Vila Autódromo is our project", "Removal: no! Urbanization: yes! yes! yes!", "Do not remove my dream, urbanize it: 40 years of Vila Autódromo", "The apartments built in the place of Vila Autódromo will be sold. Is this public policy? No! This is real estate speculation!". The housing secretary presented the project to the community: a complex of five story buildings with apartments of 40m2, the condo would have a common pool, recreation area and a daycare center. When asked about why the City Hall wouldn't use the budget to urbanize the community instead of removing it, the secretary answered that his role in the process was

only to implement the project, not being of his jurisdiction to answer what is the motive for the inclusion of the area into the Olympic Park. When asked to provide a document with the proposal on paper so the residents could evaluate it properly, nothing was handed over.

Furthermore, a public note expressing support to Vila Autódromo was written and signed by 45 professionals and NGO´s involved in the case, among others there were: engineers, architects, city planners, lawyers, sociologists, psychologists, university professors, political scientists, judges, journalists, and NGO´s leaders. Many of these professionals were involved in the preparation of reports and surveys to be used in the legal process, some of these even in service to the City Hall. The note denounced the commitment of the mayor to the real estate capital and the unlawfulness of the removal plans. The removal of Vila Autódromo goes against the Municipal Law article 429, VI paragraph. Lastly, the note appealed to the human aspect of the case: "it is a cruelty to say that we need to embellish the areas where tourists will pass during the 2014 World Cup and 2016 Olympic Games. If this mentality prevails it would be needed to remove about 2/3 of the town's population and dress up Rio like a European state". *

Denouncements of irregularities in the housing project

The plans of the City Hall for Vila Autódromo present several irregularities, which the administration seems to deal with by ignoring, avoiding comments and hoping that the emergency of the Olympic structures will overcome in the end. Besides having no legal basis for removal, a new information would be made public days after the meeting and make the promises of the City Hall appear even more untrustworthy: the purchase for the property for the housing project had to be cancelled because of denouncements of irregularity. The accusation published in the Estadao[59] newspaper explained that the land had been bought with no public bidding and was probably overpriced. Besides, the two real estate companies that owned it had given large contributions to the mayor's political campaign and some of his secretaries, including the Habitation Secretary. Rossi Residential and PDG Realty had given together over 134 thousand dollars to Eduardo Paes' campaign in the last municipal elections. The Chief of Staff in Paes' administration and the city councilman Luíz Antonio Guaraná had also received a donation of 33 thousand dollars from Rossi. The mayor denied any irregularities but cancelled the purchase four days later. The article also stressed that the two

[59] Electronic version of the article from 06/10/2011: http://www.estadao.com.br/noticias/nacional,rio-paga-r-199-mi-por-area-de-doador-de-paes,782004,0.htm, accessed (25/02/2012)

companies would benefit from the removal of Vila Autódromo. Three of the companies' investments are neighbors of the community and are expected to increase in value if the favela is removed. Still, with the situation of the property undefined, a team of the Secretary of Habitation (SMH) came one day after the cancellation to enroll residents for the new housing project, but most of the residents, aware of the situation, denied to give any information.

5.3.5 A Public-private partnership to build the Olympic Park

The City Hall opened a bidding for a public-private partnership (PPP) in the construction of the Olympic Park. The chosen contractor will have to invest approximately 170 million dollars in the Olympic Park, in exchange, the prefecture will grant a property of 800.000m2[60] in which the investors will be allowed to build condominiums, commercial establishments and hotels. The contractors will be responsible for the construction and urbanization of a condominium to resettle Vila Autódromo, an office complex that will function as press center during the games and a five star hotel with 400 rooms (to host journalists). Besides, the City Hall will pay the contractors the sum of 288 million dollars during the next 15 years. This budget does not include the expenses of the sports arenas that are responsibility of the federal administration. "The payback for the City Hall will happen in the long term, through tax collection and through the accomplishment of an important event to the city", [61] declared the secretary of the Chief of Staff of Rio.

According to city councilman Eliomar Coelho,[62] the business is highly questionable since the City Hall has resources to build the Park and could sell the lots to the companies after they had increased in value. Besides, he questions the removal of Vila Autódromo, which was not part of the original site for the Park:

> So if Vila Autódromo is kept in the (winning) project and has no use for the Olympic games why does the City Hall insist in its removal and not urbanization? The answer lies in the draft of the PPP's contract, the fifth clause of 1st Annex. The text defines the area of the Olympic Park, and against the winning project, includes the site of the Town's

[60] This property is not part of the Olympic Park area and includes Vila Autódromo.

[61] Electronic version of the interview for O Globo published on, March 5th 2012: http://oglobo.globo.com/rio/consorcio-liderado-pela-odebrecht-vence-licitacao-para-parque-olimpico-4220966#ixzz1p5ivpjNu, accessed (13/04/2012)

[62] Article published in the blog *Cidades Possíveis* in November 7th 2011 by Eliomar Coelho: http://www.eliomar.com.br/2011/11/07/parque-olimpico-especulacao-oficial-e-por-contrato-em-beneficio-de-quem/, accessed (12/03/2012)

> racetrack in an area given to private enterprise. Compare the private areas of the legacy of the 2030 City Hall and the design of Aecom. *

(Cidades Possíveis 2011)

The only project presented for the bidding was a partnership of the contractors Odebrecht, Andrade Gutierrez and Carvalho Hosken; three of the major real estate investors in Rio. Carvalho Hosken alone owns about ten million square meters in Barra da Tijuca. The company's director, Carlos Fernando de Carvalho, says that he began to buy the land in the beginning of 1970 because he believed it would become the new metropolitan center of Rio[63]:

> I have no doubt that with this volcano they lit on the area (the Olympic Games), Barra will surprise Rio as a privileged space…this will be the geographic center of Rio de Janeiro city... this will happen through the Transolímpica, Transoeste, Transcarioca[64], which lacked before to make this area into the center…the great advantage of these well located spaces is that if you make the correct interventions that will only increase more and more in value. *

The property where the athletes'' village will be built is one million square meters and also belongs to Carvalho Hosken. Besides, the company got the right to build the 40 buildings with 3.528 apartments that after the game will be sold as high-class condos. The project of a metropolitan center close to the racetrack and Olympic Park are also headed by the company, which owns two of the four million square meter area [65]. To the president of the Commercial and Industrial Association of Barra da Tijuca (Acibarra), Carvalho Hosken "helped to build avenues, invested in security, which contributed to stop the process of favelização [66] in the region…". The expectation of real estate investors for the area is indeed paying off: the appreciation in the value of properties by square meter in the avenue Abelardo Bueno and surroundings (neighbor to Vila Autódromo) has increased over 15% in commercial points and 40% in residential properties since the announcement of the Games.

Vila Autódromo´s counter-proposal and denouncements

The announcement of the result of the PPP bidding would be given on January 18th

[63] In interview to the website of the city Hall for the Olympic Games: http://www.cidadeolimpica.com/uma-parceria-que-permite-o-desenvolvimento-pleno-da-barra/, accessed (05/03/2012)

[64] They are three new BRT's (Bus Rapid Transport highways) that the City Hall is building to connect distant areas of the city and attend the demand of public transportation. All three of them will cross Barra da Tijuca.

[65] Electronic version of *Jornal do Brasil* from March 1st 2012: http://www.jb.com.br/rio/noticias/2012/03/01/rio-2016-e-investimentos-da-carvalho-hosken-impulsionam-economia-da-barra/, accessed (6/04/2012)

[66] *Favelização* is a Brazilian expression for the social phenomena of emergence and/or proliferation of favelas.

2012. The day before, Vila Autódromo, represented by the public defenders office, managed to suspend the bidding until the rights of habitation of the Vila Autódromo's population are secured. The Judge from the 5ª Vara de Fazenda Pública[67] recognized the right of the community over the property. The City Hall responded by an official note postponing the announcement to March 5th 2012[68]. They appealed the decision alleging: "The state government had granted those titles in a 'pro-invader' political climate that gave squatters a sense of impunity and false entitlement to the land." Carvalho Hosken's president added: "everything was done in an environmental protection area". He explains that the home titles given by the State of Rio two decades ago cannot be considered valid because they were part of "squatter-friendly" administration; "it was all done in an irregular way" (Latin America Monitor 2012).

On March 5th 2012 the justice decided to allow the bidding to continue and the only candidate of the PPP (a partnership of Odebrecht, Andrade Gutierrez and Carvalho Hosken) won the lender to build the Olympic Park. Two preliminary injunctions are still pending: the situation of Vila Autódromo and the action moved by the CBA (Brazilian automobilist confederation) about the interdiction of the city's racetrack. The judge decided that the negotiations for the Olympic Park could continue as long as both preliminaries were attended. The secretary of Chief of Staff affirmed that both Vila Autódromo and CBA are to gain with the project: "They will be benefited. There has to be celebrations. We will attend to the humble, but we will not talk with those who are there to make money".

During the last months of 2011 the community received support from several organizations to design a counter proposal for the housing project of the City Hall. Using all the local information collected during the census in the community, the association developed a plan for urbanization[69] that meets to the environmental and structural needs of the area.

[67] It is the 5th Public court of Rio de Janeiro that deals with cases involving public property.

[68] Electronic version of the article published in O Globo on January 8th 2012: http://oglobo.globo.com/rio/justica-suspende-licitacao-para-construcao-do-parque-olimpico-carioca-3705532#ixzz1p5taz5eb, accessed (23/03/2012)

[69] "Known as "People's Plan Vila Autódromo," the project was developed in a partnership between the Association of Residents of the community and teachers and students of the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro (UFRJ) and the Universidade Federal Fluminense (UFF). In the process of developing the plan, three workshops were held, six assemblies, and several meetings with the residents. Technically, the plan is divided into four programs: housing, sanitation, infrastructure and environment, public services, and cultural and community development. The housing program, for example, provides units of various sizes, some with possibility of extension, which allows to take into account the specificities of each family. Environmental issues, often used as an argument for the removal of the community, were also included in the plan, which provides, among other things, an area of environmental remediation Range Marginal Lagoon Jacarepaguá and Beira stream of 23 000 m². With regard to public services, the plan proposes the inclusion of the community in the Family Health program and the construction of a kindergarten and a school hall. It was also planned to create new areas of sport

Furthermore, an articulation of all the popular committees for the World Cup and Olympic Games released, in national act, a dossier[70] denouncing irregularities committed by the Rio de Janeiro's Municipality in the preparation for the mega events in town. The document entitled "Mega events and human rights violations in Brazil" was also delivered to the International Olympic Committee, but until now (August 2012) they haven't received any response. The document presents a detailed report from many communities that had their rights violated, including Vila Autódromo. They also hope that an article published in The New York Times[71] about the dossier will stir up the discussions about removal policies. The American newspaper stressed that Vila Autódromo is a symbol to many other favelas that are being removed to make room for the mega events.

and leisure. For residents, the plan shows that both technically and financially, the community could be kept at the site, without prejudice to the completion of mega sporting events. Financially, including, the plan is far more advantageous than the proposed relocation of City Hall. While the proposed community is budgeted at $ 13 million, the City Hall costs $ 38 million. (Raquel Ronik – *The UN Special Rapporteur on Adequate Housing* – published on August 20th, 2012: http://raquelrolnik.wordpress.com/2012/08/20/vila-autodromo-remocao-e-eleicoes/, accessed (24/08/2012)

[70] The full electronic version of the dossier: http://comitepopulario.wordpress.com/, accessed (08/03/2012)

[71] Electronic version of the article in the New York Times dated from March 4th 2012: http://www.nytimes.com/2012/03/05/world/americas/brazil-faces-obstacles-in-preparations-for-rio-olympics.html?_r=3&sq=rio%20de%20janeiro&st=cse&scp=2&pagewanted=all, accessed (21/03/2012)

6. The role of the Association

6.1.The Association

The residents' association of Vila Autódromo has been the driving force behind the community's struggle to stay in their land. During the last 20 years they have been their voice of resistance and the main promoter of the public debate generated around their history. It is complicated to affirm categorically, but the odds that Vila Autódromo would have been removed a long time ago if it wasn't for the engagement and struggle of their residents' association are very high. The current team leading the association is formed by Mr. Altair Guimarães (president) and Mrs. Jane Nascimento (social director).

These two leaders perform very specific roles in the association. Though these are not exclusive for each one of them, and sometimes overlap, they stand out quite clearly in the function they execute and not less in their declarations during interviews.

- Mr. Altair represents "the official" face of the association, he is the point of contact with public authorities, both to the City Hall and to the state Public defense. He is also the one that makes "official statements" to the press and is more directly involved with the juridical aspect of the case.
- Mrs. Jane has the post of social director; she is exceptionally active in working with other communities' leaderships, NGO´s and organizations engaged in the promotion of citizen rights. She works to form and keep partnerships but her role is also a practical one: promoting public protests, painting banners, attending to meetings with partners, contributing with their public protests, recording and filming relevant events and collecting material that can be used to build their case.

Together and with the support of residents and partners they have kept their ground, literally, in the dispute for the land that they occupy.

In this chapter I intend to analyze the role that the association performs in the resistance of Vila Autódromo against eviction. I decided to divide this analysis in the same way that the association divides their roles, represented by its two leaders. Each of them has their specific area of action, actors they deal with, and strategies that are fueled by a specific aspect of their discourse. In the two sections of this chapter I will analyze separately these roles that together compose the association's role and which, hopefully, will provide us with a fuller understanding of how they organize, work and what they represent.

6.1.1 Organization and representativeness

This first section should provide us with an overview of how the association is organized internally and how this organization works to legitimize their legal representativeness before the public authorities and the public opinion. The function performed by Mr. Altair, the president of the association, will be the focus of this analysis and it represents the legal (juridical) aspect of the association's role.

The association was organized in 1986 with the objective of legitimizing the community, practice that multiplied throughout favelas with the opening to democracy in Brazil in the beginning of the 1980's. Lacking formal documentation and, sometimes, public recognition of their existence, this was the strategy found by these communities to secure land tenure. In fact, the new Brazilian legislation dated from 1988 gave grounds for these associations to request property rights based on the principle of adverse possession[72]. In order to receive recognition from public authorities, the association must be formed and registered following the guidelines determined by Brazilian law[73], and which Vila Autódromo's association has righteously fulfilled.

Representatives are elected by secret vote; all the residents have the right to vote as well as to apply for the post of president. The elections are regulated and carried out by the FAFERJ (Federation of Favelas of Rio de Janeiro) to ensure the neutrality and fair competition among candidates. Once the president is elected, they have autonomy to form their own team, but all work is voluntary, there are no remunerated positions (FAFERJ). Although not compulsory, a yearly fee is expected to be paid by registered members, which is destined to cover expenses involving the administration of the association. A small house built in a joint effort by the residents during the 1980's works as an office. There are kept all documents belonging to the community, a phone, and a desk where the team can meet and work together. On the wall there is a collection of pictures showing the events and works made by collective effort in the community: children's day parties, Christmas' parties, the cleaning of the water channel, the caving of a trench to rainwater etc. There are also many informative posters about their rights spread in the room. A blackboard, chairs, tables and

[72] See section 5.2.1. Law No 10.257 from July 10th 2001. Section V article 12 paragraphs 3. Source: Presidência da República Casa Civil Subchefia para Assuntos Jurídicos.

[73] A Residents Association is a non-profit civil entity, consisting of at least 13 residents of a particular locality. To be effective, the neighborhood association must have the minutes and bylaws, duly registered in the notary's office and have CNPJ (Public register of judicial person) with the IRS (taxes contribution). These 13 members form a board, with president, vice president, secretaries, treasurers, social director and supervisory board (and substitutes). New Civil Code articles 53 to 61.

schoolbooks are used during the free classes offered twice a week for children in need of school tutoring.

In one of my interviews with Mr. Altair I asked if he considered that the association worked well and why. He answered that he believed it worked because it was doing what it was set out to do: to represent the demands of the residents of Vila Autódromo. According to him, the reason why they fight to stay was because the community manifested the wish to stay, if not, he added, "there would be no meaning in our struggle". The reason for the successful work done by the association, he explained, is the democratic way they are organized: trust:

> …If the community decided to accept the housing project offered by the City Hall, the association would present this decision to the public authorities and stop resisting. The fact that I, personally, would choose not to go, plays no role in this decision. I'm here not to represent my interests but the wishes of the community. As long as they are well informed and aware of what is happening…. that is my job, to make sure that they know our rights, assure that they are not going to leave because they are afraid of losing everything … So, yes, I would say it works, because I fight to stay because they want to stay… and don't politicians have their authority based on the fact that the majority has chosen them as representatives? So our authority also comes from that we were chosen in a democratic way by the people to represent their wishes. *

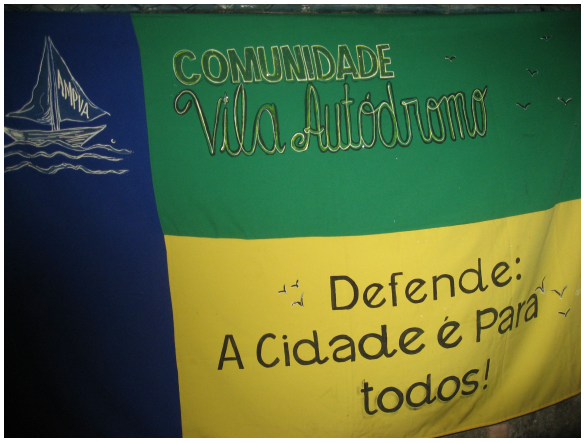

Figure 8. (Left): flag painted by Mrs. Jane "Community Vila Autódromo defends: the city is for everyone".
Figure 9. (Right): the house of the association. Source: Aimê Olaussen

Originally, the association was supposed to work to improve their life conditions, says the president, but the long-lasting dispute for the land has characterized most of their work: "we have never been able to get a daycare center, which was one of the main demands of the residents…and we have requested urbanization works for a long time …it's very hard to get anything from the City Hall since they really want to see us out of here." They still conduct some collective work to fix more urgent problems in the community but Mr. Altair regrets

that they haven't been able to do more to improve life conditions in the community.

I have observed that both leaders keep constant, close contact with the residents. Their local legitimacy is maintained by the respect that the community holds for them. Mr. Altair, for example, is called by the residents by the nickname "paíca", a fondly way to refer to a fatherly figure. They received no kind of economical compensation for their work, still, according to the residents I have spoken with, they have performed their duties as president and director of the association for approximately eight years with loyalty and constancy. They seem to be very aware of the need to keep an open and close communication, often praising the familiar environment of Vila Autódromo in their speeches.

6.1.2 An incomplete democracy

As part of his function, Mr. Altair represents the community before the public agencies. While Vila Autódromo enjoys a close cooperation with the state public defense's office, the dialogue with the City Hall has passed from non-existing to precarious during the last 20 years. When the community was threatened with removal in 1993 there were no meetings with the mayor or his secretaries, no explanations given except the notification of a public-political decision made with no popular participation. By then, state and municipal political administrations were found in opposite sides of the dispute and the community could count on the political and judicial support given by the state of Rio.

Since 2010, the City Hall, represented by the housing secretary, has set meetings with the association to "discuss" their situation. They recognized publicly that it was an error to not talk to the community before publishing the news and agreed to keep an open dialogue with the communities that will be removed. However, the leaders of Vila Autódromo's association and the public defenders have both declared that after attending the first meetings, they realized that this "dialogue" was only open to discuss how removal can be carried out with popular participation but not to discuss other possibilities besides removal. This position was confirmed during the visit of the housing secretary to the community in October 2011, when he declared to not being in his power to discuss why and if removal is going to happen but only how it is going to happen.

The association complains that the "space" for debate and negotiation that the City Hall affirms to promote is "just to keep the appearance of a democratic State" while in truth, the current City Hall's administration is indeed "authoritarian and works for the benefit of the

rich". The need to construct this democratic public space in Brazil is supported by the works of Caldeira and Holston (1999). They describe the process of democratic consolidation in Latin America as "problematic and perverse" and take as an example how necessary it is to move on from a limited political perspective when we think about democratic states (1999:691).

The case of Vila Autódromo is one of the many social-state struggles happening within the framework of "uncivil democracy", where the ambiguous mediation between society and State does not occur in its ideal form; instead, calling for a civil resistance against an authoritarian State. But as Machado da Silva and Leite (2004) warn us, to admit that the State apparatus in Brazil tend to be empty formal institutions does not imply the denial that these are still the fundamental, operative sources of power. The answer to them would be "to invest in the democratization of the state and in the construction of a democratic public sphere". In practice, this means to insist to exhaustion that the state apparatus function effectively, so that it gradually comes to perform their functions formally established; the expression of the results of struggles happening internally. "It is about resisting the abuses of state institutions transformed into private apparatus"* (Machado da Silva and Leite 2004:75-76). In other words, building networks of power that manipulate the social apparatus to work in favor of private interest, in this case, the real estate capital. The struggle waged by the association is a great example of this resistance in the local sphere; although the City Hall administration has systematically violated their rights to the land and participation in decisions affecting them, they keep insisting on the principles that should rule a democratic State.

While on the field, I have witnessed that for several times news about the removal would come to the leaders through the newspapers instead of been contact direct by the City Hall agents. This channel of communication used by the City Hall consists in highly unequal form of negotiation since the residents are left with no voice of response, revealing a display of authoritarian power. What's more, the "dialogue" that the City Hall claims to maintain with the community consists in a merely demonstration of official duties, in practice, they are constantly defining and redefining what the dialogue will be about. While keeping completely "out of the table" the possibility to discuss other alternatives besides removal, they bring up new topics to confer that in reality are already made resolutions of their policies.

Regarding the same issue, Pinheiro (2000) affirms that, effectively, only a democratic civil society can preserve a democratic State. The role played by civil society goes beyond politic participation in fair elections; it extends itself as a force to guarantee effective

democracy. It is fundamental in all matters concerning social justice, protection of civil and human rights and monitoring of performance of State institutions from which he stresses the principles of transparency, effectiveness and accountability. A way of "pushing" the hand of the State is when these organizations function in order to strengthen local social controls of the public policies of the State (Pinheiro 2000:138-9). Therefore, the importance of these residents' associations in the democratization process cannot be underestimated. Potentially, they can strengthen the political participation of socially vulnerable areas such as the favelas and allow a fairer negotiation of their claims.

We have seen in this first section that the role performed by the president, the official and legal representative of the community, is developed under a juridical framework; their organization, meetings and decisions must follow defined laws and guidelines in order to be recognized as legal before the juridical system. Taking as a starting point the definition provided by Caldeira and Holston (1999:693) that justice (here meant as the judiciary system) is the means to all other rights, we will see how the principle of rule-of-law is appropriated by the association in their resistance to removal.

6.1.3.The (un) rule of law

As the time for the Olympic games approached and the City Hall did not redraw the decision to remove the residents of Vila Autódromo, the tension of their situation increased, making people feel more afraid and insecure. In that way, the municipal administration ignores two very explicit legal aspects: there is still no judicial decision about the case, and to remove Vila Autódromo would mean to trespass the Municipal Law about evictions. The strategy used by the president of the association to deal with this situation was to keep one single discourse during interviews and association's meetings; a discourse based in their legal rights and the rule of law:

> We have documentation of this land, we pay our taxes, we await judicial decision on our case, we are following the law in every aspect…but the City Hall on the other hand, wants to violate the law as it didn't exist…not even they are above the law…we won't move one feet until the judge tell us so…and that was the advice we also received from the public defenders: Reject! Reject! Reject removal until you have a verdict. *

In the beginning, when the first order of eviction came in 1993, their resistance was manifested itself in two forms: with the close cooperation with the public defense's office and resisting physically to the demolition machines brought by the then sub-mayor of Barra Eduardo Paes (current mayor of Rio). Ironically enough, it was justice that stopped the

community from being demolished in 1993 but not in the way one would expect from the legal system. One resident that witnessed the happening told that the sub-mayor was only stopped by one of the public defenders that confronted him face to face, accusing him of trespassing the law. The community seized the moment and closed both entries with barricades, rocks and wood planks. The case got public repercussion forcing the sub-mayor to redraw to await a judicial decision.

This time, however, unlike the past rounds, Vila Autódromo could not count on support from the state government of Rio de Janeiro (the current administration of Sérgio Cabral). The plans for the mega events in Rio have brought together federal, state and municipal administrations despite the historical brawl between those and the usual partisans' quarrels. The Public defense's office of Rio de Janeiro state has, however, continued to give full support to the community. This is a public organ that possesses functional and administrative autonomy and represents the constitutional commitment that every citizen, including the poorest, should have access to justice.[74]

They keep regular meetings with the association working to gather reports and surveys that could help in their defense. They are also present during many of the assemblies that the association organizes. Since October 2011, when the community has been intensively under pressure of the City Hall to leave their houses and accept their project, the public defenders have visited the families, house by house, to explain the exact situation in the legal sphere and to reaffirm their rights to stay until a court decision is made. In their work to construct a case for the defense of Vila Autódromo, they have produced reports and surveys of great value to the community. With the emergency of the Olympic Games' preparations in their case, they have additionally prepared a report[75] to the International Olympic Committee with denouncements of how the City Hall's political administration is carrying out policies that trespass the legal rights of the favelas' population, exemplified by the case of Vila Autódromo.

Pinheiro (2000:131) explains that "access to justice in Brazil, especially for the poor, has always been extremely precarious. Historically, the judiciary has not been perceived as a

[74] The first public defender's office of Brazil was established by federal decree in Rio de Janeiro, in 1897. The reason for its creation was the need for a public organ that could ensure the constitutional principles of access to justice and equality between persons (Defensoria Pública do Estado do Rio de Janeiro).

[75] The full electronic version of the report produced by the Public defense of Rio delivered to the International Olympic Committee in May 8th 2010:
http://fotos.midiatatica.info/gallery/main.php?g2_view=core.DownloadItem&g2_itemId=2586, several accesses.

body that protects the rights of the underprivileged classes, but rather as an institution responsible for the criminalization and repression of this classes." In the case of Vila Autódromo, we dare to say, though with caution, that it has occurred an advance of these rights to a certain degree if we consider the length they have been able to resist eviction and also in the way that the public defense has worked actively to defend their rights. On the other hand, the case still hasn't got a verdict, and justice has not laid sanctions (only valid for a very short term) to stop the harassment suffered by the community. The insecurity that their rights might be denied if the City Hall manages to manipulate the legal system is indeed real and very justifiable, taking into account the historical background of Brazilian justice[76].

Public defenders had achieved a short term victory for the community in the beginning of this year when the justice decreed the suspension of the announcement for the PPP (in the construction of the Olympic park) until the Vila Autódromo's housing situation was defined. The suspension was redrawn less than two months later, and on March 6th another judge allowed negotiations to continue as long as habitation rights were preserved. In summary, the City Hall keeps the decision to remove Vila Autódromo despite the fact that there are no legal grounds for it (actually there are against it), while there is a judicial case still ongoing between them and the community and finally, the purchase of the property were the housing project supposed to be build was suspended due denounces of irregularities.

The fact that the City Hall continues to move towards unconstitutional measures despite all these factors shows us why "Brazilians view the judicial system as profoundly class-biased" (Caldeira and Holston 1999:709). Brazilians tend to perceive the judiciary system as a way through which the rich can manipulate the rules in their favor, which in turn, produces generalized expectations of impunity or abuse. The entire field of law has been contaminated by the discredit of the judiciary as a means to justice, and according to Caldeira and Holston (1999:709) "the courts remain especially ineffective in arbitrating social relations in ways that would impose sanctions on the offenses of the powerful and protect citizens from abuse by the state and its agents."

Vila Autódromo and the resistance carried out by its association represent a great challenge for civil democracy in Brazil. Especially because, depending on the verdict on their case, it could represent a victory or a defeat of the democratic system based on the rule-of-law. It is interesting to observe how the association has demonstrated an unexpected

[76] Corruption is probably the first word that comes to the minds of us Brazilians when we think about politicians and the rule of law.

confidence in the judiciary system. As I see, this is also part of their strategy to push the City Hall representatives to subject themselves to the same, overruling power of law and to achieve a level of equality in their negotiations. This position works to strengthen both the values of equality defended by them, as their wish to be represented as law-abiding citizens, reveling in this way the actions of the City Hall as illegal.

I believe this to be the reason why the community was chosen as a symbol of resistance by the social movements. It composes a reasonably clear case of cooperation between public administration agents and private capital interests working to deconstruct the civil rights of a low-income group. In a neighborhood like Barra, where the clash between private and social interests and class divisions are so evident, it becomes easier to discern how public policies can work to reinforce the socio-spatial disintegration of Rio.

However, the case of Vila Autódromo represents more than that; it takes us beyond the perception of a poor, stigmatized group of people being passively manipulated by others stronger than them; it show us how they have appropriated the principles of civil democracy, citizenship and the rule of law in legitimating their resistance. It also shows us a part of civil society (although not the majority, active in resistance) that is able to see beyond the stigmatization of favelas as violent, threatening and ignorant and that is willing to take their cause as the cause of all of us; of a city that fights to organize its space in a new, democratic way, walking away from a history of perverse hierarchical social structures. In a way, these groups are insisting, as proposed by Machado da Silva and Leite (2004), to exhaustion that state apparatus and their agents work in order to promote a civil democracy. It is in the local sphere where the contact between State and society becomes grounded and practical that the struggles to transform a political democracy into a civil democracy can occur. This takes us to our next point in this analysis: the role of the association viewed from its partnerships.

6.2 Their network

6.2.1 Movimentos populares

The focus of the second level of this analysis will be set on the role of the association viewed from the social director's function, performed currently by Mrs. Jane Nascimento[77].

[77] I find difficult to do justice to the work of this remarkable lady in my short descriptions. She was constantly filming every event related to removal policies and collecting materials that could be used in their cause, not only Vila Autódromo's but also of other communities threaten of removal. Though she received no payment, her work inside and outside the association was never-ceasing: she would join protests and meetings in other

This role represents the socio-political frame of their resistance. According to their statutes, the social director function is primarily to develop, promote and run social events of the Association; however, triggered by the risk of removal, Mrs. Jane's role has expanded to new realms, generally defined as the civil society (other communities, NGO´s, organizations, professionals involved in the case, etc) and which she calls by the general name of social movement. Mrs. Jane works consistently to form and keep partnerships for the association. When I first came to Vila Autódromo it was she who received me and quickly introduced me to others members of the association and partners. She was eager to tell me the story of their struggle and to provide any necessary help I might need.

While my interviews with Mr. Altair provided me with legal processes and documentations, Mrs. Jane would lead me through the history of their social resistance by telling me about the strategies and tools they have used outside the juridical sphere. As I listened to her reports, I was convinced that their resistance was not limited to the works of public defenders. This was by no means a case of a helpless, fragile, poor community expecting to be saved by others. In fact, they presented a staggering political awareness in comparison with the majority of Brazilians I know. They worked actively to promote their civil rights: they were prompt to find new strategies, new partnerships, collect evidence for the court, promote protests and anything else that could strengthen their power of negotiation and promote their cause.

It is very interesting to observe how these strategies and tools have varied in different times of their dispute with the City Hall. In 1993, the community lived its most dramatic moment when to avoid the entrance of demolishing machines, they closed the streets for many days. During the next years, while the public defenders worked closely with them to build a defense for their case, their trust in their paralegals seemed to grow (not to mention the heroic action by one of the defenders in 1993 that stopped the sub-mayor from demolishing the community) and lead them into more strategic, thought-through means. After all, though rocks and wood planks could hold machines out for a few days, it didn't constitute a practical long-term plan.

In 2007, still no verdicts were given to the case and the City Hall threatened to remove Vila Autódromo once more. The request for their removal was based on the accusation that

communities, paint boards and plaques to be used during protests, keep residents informed of the case every time we would stop to chat with someone on the streets, take pictures and film meetings, and register virtually everything that could be used to defend their cause.

the community caused environmental and esthetical damage to the area adding that the houses located close to the lake were found in "areas of risk[78]". The association began to work with the public defense to collect evidence that could break the argumentation used by the City Hall against them. They registered, mostly by photos, the pollution caused by a big neighbor condominium and a hospital that dejected their sewage straight into the lake, contesting the accusation that they were responsible for its pollution. They also showed how mansions and high-class condominiums in other parts of Barra occupied the same "area of risk". In the latest years, they have registered the clearing of extensive neighbor lands to the construction of the City of Rock, promoted by the City Hall itself. In that way, they hoped to unveil the joint effort of the Municipal agents and real estate capital to criminalize their occupation and "to free the land from poor people".

Since the last notification of removal, given in 2009, the association continued to work in the same way adding that this time the number of favelas to be removed trespassed one hundred; a fact that helped to strengthen their resistance, adding numbers and partnerships. Another event that developed the use of the new strategies was the proliferation of social networks and the increasing access to the Internet. The use of blogs, web pages and the alternative media, facilitated their contact with other communities, provided new channels to disclose their situation to the public and consequently gather support. In fact, when Mrs. Jane offered to hand over to me the material she had gathered during the last few years in her computer, there were news-cuts, pictures, and documents of several other communities. Vila Autódromo was only one of her many files titled under "removal of communities".

6.2.2 Presenting Vila Autódromo's partners

In this section I would like to introduce the partners that have worked with the association in the support of their cause:

CatComm

My first contact with the residents' association was promoted by one of the NGO´s that cooperate with Vila Autódromo. CatComm[79] is the short name for Catalytic Communities, an

[78] Area of risk is the definition used for areas where physical and/or environmental conditions represent a risk for the life and health of its inhabitants.

[79] CatComm presents itself as a not-for-profit organization working to destigmatize Rio de Janeiro's favela communities and integrate them into the wider society, generating global recognition of their heritage status.

NGO that has collaborated with Vila Autódromo since 2009. It was through their news site, Rio On Watch[80] that I read for the first time the story of their struggle. The support provided by CatComm during my field research was of immense value. I believe that without their contact to introduce me to the association it would be very difficult to gain the kind of access I had with the leaders. During the time of my visit, there were many rumors about the removal with supposedly "new information" which often worked to destabilize their organization. In addition, there were several newspaper articles published on O Globo that informed on decisions very different from those brought by the leaders during their last residents' meetings. As a result, an atmosphere of suspicious and distrust was growing in the community. Under such circumstances, it was invaluable for my research to have a contact that brought me so close to the leaders, giving me free access to the association.

More than that, CatComm's media database (articles, videos and interviews) has provided me with trustworthy information about the case often leading me to the discovery of other relevant sources. This process was not exclusive to my research; they do work making links between the association and academicians. Besides, they develop a close contact with both alternative and stream media that constitutes a powerful resource to the association and to the resistance; through these partnerships and exchange with visitors, they have the opportunity to disclose their struggle in a way that otherwise would be silenced.

The association complains about the way that the mainstream coverage often presents a distorted and biased report of their history. I witnessed this fact twice during my visit. The first was when O Globo had a front-page article about the removal of Vila Autódromo[81]. The newspaper completely ignored the resistance movement happening around the case making it appear as if there was no dispute, and that it was up to the City Hall to make the final decision. To add up, they quoted the case of how other favelas were formed with the help of drug traffic groups, a totally displaced subject when the article referred to Vila Autódromo, which has never been occupied or influenced by these groups. The second time, the same

[80] In May 2010, Catalytic Communities (CatComm), a US 501c3 nonprofit organization and Rio de Janeiro-based NGO, launched Rio Olympics Neighborhood Watch (Rio On Watch), a program to bring visibility to favela community voices in the lead-up to the 2016 Olympics, to be held in Rio de Janeiro. This news site, RioOnWatch.org, is our primary vehicle for publishing the perspectives of community organizers, residents, and international observers, in light of the fast-paced urban transformations that currently characterize Rio. The Rio On Watch program also works to grow the participation of community journalists and international observers in reporting on Rio's transformations. Finally, this program dialogues with the mainstream and alternative press to engender a more accurate picture of favelas, their contributions to the city, and their perspectives (CatComm).

[81] About the article released by O Globo see section 5.3.3.

newspaper released an article about robberies that happened in the entrance of Vila Autódromo during the Rock in Rio 2011[82]. The day after, some of the residents told me how they have helped to catch the thieves (that were not from the community but were hiding there), and delivered them to the police; this part, they added, "was not on the news, of course". They concluded with a resentful comment that the newspaper was so quick to describe that the robberies happened in the entrance of the community that they ignored the fact that Vila Autódromo was located exactly between two of the main strategic points for the festival, meaning that virtually everyone had to pass in front of the community to get into the concert area.

The alternative media

The president and the social director of the association argue that such representation of the community to the public serves to reinforces the "ideas people have of the poor": "it makes it look like we are criminals and threatening the security of the area". In my analysis, it also deprives the community from their political content, helping to reinforce the image of favelas' dwellers as pseudo-citizens. What the channels of alternative media do is to promote the "other side" of the history of the favelas, the side of its dwellers, their struggles and their need to affirm an identity different from that based on a stigmatizing discourse. A tendency that has increased in Rio's NGO´s lately is that instead of that usual advocacy motto "to give voice to the poor", many organizations are deploying the idea of "giving the poor the means to be heard"; instead of telling their stories for them, they give support so that they can tell their stories themselves. It means to cooperate or give support by practical ways such as training them in the use of computers, internet, social medias, basic journalistic skills, use of cameras, the donation of electronic equipment and promotion of their production in websites, blogs, etc.

Movimento national de luta pela moradia

Created in 1990 during the I National encounter of Movements for Habitation represented by 13 Brazilian states, this is a social movement that fights for habitation in urban areas[83] but is closely connected to the MST (Landless Workers' Movement), regarded as the greatest social movement in Latin America and to CUT (Unified Workers' Central), the main

[82] Electronic version of the article: http://oglobo.globo.com/cultura/cerca-de-30-pessoas-sao-furtadas-na-porta-do-rock-in-rio-2866575, accessed (08/02/201)
[83] Accessed 23/07/2012, http://www.forumreformaurbana.org.br/

national trade union center in Brazil. Their work focuses on the legalization of urban occupation and on the right for urban land, housing and sanitation.

They were often present in the meetings of the Conselho Popular also joining the protests of communities in risk of removal. In October 2011 they took Mrs. Jane to Brasilia as part of a group of community's leaders that delivered a formal request to the Ministry of Cities. The request appealed that no funds for habitation projects would be released to Rio's City Hall until the habitation rights of the population were respected and forced evictions cancelled.

Comitê Popular Olimpíadas

Several actors of organized civil society formed the Olympic Popular Committee in order to denounce irregularities in the preparation for the World Cup 2014 and the Olympic Games 2016. Their motto states: "World Cup and Olympics – Let's play clean: participation, transparency, social control and conquest of rights" *(Comitê Popular Rio). Their focus is to increase popular participation in the decisions made for the Games, especially the ones involving the guarantee of human rights throughout the process. They aim for a national popular articulation that is strong enough to directly influence the decision-making of the mega events.

For Vila Autódromo, the committee has been a valuable partner in their struggle, from the writing of a dossier denouncing irregularities committed by the Rio de Janeiro's Municipality in the preparation for the mega events in town to the mobilization of civil society in defense of human rights for the population evicted from their houses. It was also through this partnership that the community received the help from IPPUR[84], one of the main forces in the movement, to form the counter proposal project delivered to the City Hall last December. The project that counted with the participation of the population and the expertise of professionals in urbanization and planning presented a viable and technically founded alternative for the removal of Vila Autódromo. Furthermore, they work to promote the voice of the communities, in the case of Vila Autódromo, publishing answers from the association to newspaper articles that distort their declarations and stripe the political meaning of their resistance.

[84] IPPUR/UFRJ is the Research Institute for Urban and regional Planning part of the Rio de Janeiro Federal University.

Conselho Popular

The Popular council is formed by a group of activists and community leaders with the objective of promoting democratic participation in the fight for habitation in urban areas (Conselho Popular). They define the movement as the "people organized and speaking for themselves" but they count with close support from the *Pastoral de Favelas*. They work to strengthen the local communities by giving each other mutual support in the resistance against removals. In practice, they keep regular open public meetings where they discuss strategies for each community of how to defend their *direito pela moradia*, habitation rights. The meetings usually happen in communities with the greatest need for support at the moment.

I had the opportunity to observe one of their meetings happening in Vila Autódromo in October 2011. There were associations' leaders of several other communities, a representative of the *Movimento Nacional de Luta por Moradia*, a group of students from the cartography laboratory of the Rio de Janeiro's Federal University (UERJ) and several other university students from different academic institutions, including from Colombia and Spain. During this meeting it was decided by the council to organize and support a protest during the visit of the housing secretary to the Vila Autódromo.

Pastoral das favelas

The Pastoral of Favelas is a movement formed by the Roman Catholic Church in Brazil to support the mobilization of favela dwellers in defense of their rights, especially property rights. The movement has approximately 35 years of existence and it is part of the Pastoral work (Catholic Mission) developed in Brazil. They provide legal consultants to the Associations in favelas and work to facilitate their mobilization also making contact between different communities. In Vila Autódromo they have given support to the Residents' Association in form of legal consultancy, publishing of flyers communicating their property rights to the population, organization of frequent meetings with community leaders, etc.

UN – The UN Special Rapporteur on Adequate Housing

The participation of the UN in the case of Vila Autódromo is defined by the report[85] produced by the special Rapporteur[86] Raquel Ronik. The report, released in December 2010,

[85] The full electronic version of the report: http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrcouncil/docs/13session/A-HRC-13-20.pdf, accessed 07/08/2012.

stresses the right to non-discrimination in the context of the mega events happening in several cities of Brazil. Vila Autódromo is quoted in the report as an example of negative housing legacy, more specifically as a negative impact of the events on informal settlements. The community is also quoted as an example-case of mobilization and negotiations in face of the tension surroundings mega events: "…in the run-up to the 2007 Pan-American Games in Rio de Janeiro, the Comitê Social do PAN intervened before local authorities to request the redirection of several plans for the event, including to prevent the eviction of the Vila Autódromo…" (Ronik 2010:11).

The Brazilian government answered the report in May 2011 with a pledge to create a work force to monitor the process of removals and also a federal protocol on this issue. However, Ronik published on the rapporteur's website in April of this year that nothing has been accomplished since then and all the points raised in the report continue unanswered. For her, the current removals happening in several cities of Brazil due to the mega events are nothing less than "practices of social exclusion carried out by the Brazilian government".

The present Master Thesis

On my first day at Vila Autódromo Mrs. Jane told me that they were willing to collaborate with my research because it was vital to them to use every chance they had to "tell their story" to others. During my field research, as I got more acquainted to the facts, I have, undoubtedly, become engaged with their cause and their work. This thesis is in a certain way, my collaboration to their fight. I tried to "tell their story" faithfully, according to the facts and honestly, according to their own experiences. Reflecting over these points, I can see that my research, and consequently myself, have become an element in their extend network of actors.

Last developments in the case

Since March 2012 the situation of Vila Autódromo has remained practically unchanged. Passed the stir of the decisions and denounces made around the PPP for the construction of the Olympic Park, the City Hall announced that the removal of the community will only happen in 2013. Given that elections for mayor will take place in October 2012 and the current mayor is running for reelection, scandals and bad publicity must be avoided. The

[86] The UN Special Rapporteur on Adequate Housing was created in 2000. The Rapporteur examines, monitors, advises and reports on the right to housing across the world, provides technical assistance to governments, promotes dialogue between residents and their governments to ensure better housing conditions and encourages dialogue between other UN bodies and relevant international organizations. Accessed 04/05/2012, www.http://direitoamoradia.org/?page_id=48&lang=en.

association and its partners give continuation to the protests and denounces involving the removal of favelas. Since the announcement of Rio host City more than eight thousand people have been removed from their houses (in an non-consensual manner) and ten thousand more are expected to be resettled until the games. The most recent denouncement points out that according to the map produced by GEO Rio[87], the plot where the City Hall proposes to remove the community is located in an area of medium - high risk[88]; Vila Autódromo is currently located in a low-risk area. The "risk" concerns the danger for earth slides and the map was commissioned by the City Hall after the heavy rainfalls in 2010. According to Rio On Watch, "The identification of risk areas in this geological study has been used by the authorities as an argument to remove communities, yet in this case the authorities would be removing a community in a low risk area and resettling them in an area of risk". The juridical process to expropriate the land is now found in its last stages and a decision could be released at any moment. However, the community stands firm in its resistance and declares that they intend to fight until the end.

[87] GEO Rio is the Geotechnical Institute of the City of Rio de Janeiro,

[88] Publish at Rio On Watch on August 13th, 2012.

7. Concluding reflections

Becoming a symbol for social movements

I was interested in understanding how the association organized and worked and in finding out how they have been so successful in resisting removal for the last 20 years when so many other communities have been demolished since them. Because I grew up in Jacarepaguá[89], I could testify first hand the urban expansion that occurred in Barra and the process of social homogenization that accompanied it. Though I was not aware of it before I went to my field research, during my time in Rio it became increasingly clear how Vila Autódromo had become a sort of symbol for the social movements for citizens' rights in Rio. I wondered how this small community succeed in remaining for so long and why they have become a symbol; was it simply because they have been able to resist so long?

As I advanced in my research, I began to realize that my choice of Vila Autódromo's case as a subject of my research shared many of the reasons why social movements embraced them as a symbol. In many ways, their resistance against eviction expressed the principles of social movements fighting against the social structures that have promoted the fragmentation of Rio's urban space. Their case is placed in a much wider context of current social struggles. What is at stake is not only their right to stay, but also the construction of democratic public space where the principles of citizenship can be extended to citizens of every social-class, a process that should be made concrete in the spatial organization of the city. It is also in play the capacity of State agents to ensure these rights and not less important, the development of a powerful civil society capable of forcing these agents to do so.

The lack of concrete legal bases for their removal in the context of a highly homogenized space such as Barra, makes Vila Autódromo stand out as a symbolic case to social movement groups that defend the expansion of civil rights in Rio. The fact that the community has no history of violence, and established themselves in the area prior to the current urban expansion, provide these groups with a clear-cut case of social discrimination and spatial stratification carried out both by State agents and real estate capital. The different arguments used by the City Hall during the last 20 years have also (and ironically) contributed

[89] Barra and Jacarepaguá are close neighborhoods, in the past Barra was considered the low lands of Jacarepaguá, today they are divided into different neighborhoods that are administrated by the same *Sub-Prefeitura* (division of the political – administrative regions of the City Hall).

to the analysis of how authoritarian public policies of favelas are often charged with a stigmatized discourse of these communities. In fact, Janice Pearlman (2010) defends that the only real trace that Rio's favelas share are the way they are stigmatized by the State and society. This stigmatization is often used in public discourses to justify policies that deny the civil rights of its population.

Deconstructing the stigmatization of favelas

Through the years of its juridical dispute, the association, the community and the public defense have worked to deconstruct accusations drenched in a criminalization discourse presented by the City Hall, which is also familiar to many other low-income communities removed or in process of being removed:

- First is that their occupation is illegal, which in the case of Vila Autódromo is not true since they have permission to occupy the land for 99 years issued by the Governor of Rio de Janeiro.
- Secondly, they have caused environmental damage to the area; the defense has shown that the impact caused by the community is minimal compared with the total number of constructions in Barra that deject their waste into the lakes and which have not been accused of doing so before the defenders presented evidence.
- Thirdly, that the community trespasses the guidelines defined by the director plan for Barra da Tijuca; defense has also shown that many other constructions in Barra have not obeyed the original guidelines and that several modifications had been made along the years including areas of environmental protection. In addition, since the community has been declared "Area of Especial Social Interest",[90] these standards cannot be applied to them.
- Fourth, the community is located in an area of risk. The defense presented evidences that many other constructions in Barra are located less than 25 meters from the lake's banks, the difference is that these belong to medium-high class groups which, again, have never been accused of trespassing the guidelines. They reminded them that these occupations as well as the fishermen colony that originated Vila Autódromo established themselves prior to the creation of such guidelines.
- Fifth, we can summarize both arguments related to the structural works for the

[90] For further explanation about "Area of Especial Social Interest" see section 5.2.3.

Olympic Games 2016: first the media center followed by the security perimeter, both ideas have been abandoned by the planners; the first due to strategic location and the second because the defense has pointed out its inconsistency of arguments.

Finally, in the Public Private Partnership established to build the Olympic Park; the land occupied by Vila Autódromo is going to be used as part of the payment that the City Hall will make to private investors, which in turn will receive the license to build hotels, residential and commercial spaces in the land. This is the current battle that they face. The argument that the City Hall presents is that the housing project that they offer to the community is very close to the actual site and will improve their living conditions. The residents have rejected the project insisting in their wish to stay and reinforcing their request for urbanization works. They argue that they don't believe that removal will improve their living conditions, on the contrary, it will destroy everything that they have struggled to build. Besides, it would mean, as the association's president expressed, to accept that they are indeed too poor and ugly to stand among all the new and nicer buildings and that they are only worthy of charity, not rights. He continued to explain that the government is willing to give social support for the poor in the form of money but not in access to their rights: "we don't want charity, we want our rights…we want to be counted as people".

It is fair to say that the community would hardly still be standing if they hadn't counted on the help and support from so many effective partnerships. Nevertheless, what we see in the case of Vila Autódromo is far from a group of defenseless poor people being saved by civil society. I would go as far as to state that the main reason why the community became a symbol for social movements is the clear political awareness that they possess of their own case. Their partnerships are in fact and in practice partnerships, not paid assistance. In those, the association and the community perform an active and leading role in their struggle, at the same time, they understand the importance of their case to the social movements. In several of my interviews with the leaders their consciousness of what their case represents was very apparent. Professor Carlos Vainner from the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro also supports that Vila Autódromo's strength derives from their political awareness. To him, the difference between Vila Autódromo and other communities that did not prevail against removal is the fact that they have organized themselves in a democratic manner based on a clear understating of their citizen rights.

What they represent: beyond land and property

In many ways their physical resistance emerges as a concrete symbol of a much broader cause: the fight for social equality in a city deeply divided between rich and poor, legal and illegal, citizens and criminals. Their fight is to show that the favelas are not the "problem" of Rio, instead they are the solution for many with no other housing possibilities; it is not the nest of criminals but the home of working citizens that suffer both under criminal violence and police brutality; they are not the ground of illegality but the place where citizens fight for their own ground; where the fight for an effective democracy is made alive and practical. In this way, Vila Autódromo stands for a cause that goes beyond the concrete occupation of a desirable land by a low-income group of people. This is the reason, according to their own declarations, why they don't accept to be removed to a much "nicer, better looking and legal apartments" offered by the City Hall.

If we were to analyze the case of Vila Autódromo by a "thin" concept of development, their removal to the licensed apartments provided by the City Hall would be considered a great advance; after all they would be upgraded to a formal neighborhood and to the status of legality. Nonetheless, in their own view, it would represent a huge step backwards in their struggle for equal citizen rights and for the integration of favelas in the social and spatial structures of the city. Pearlman summarizes the struggle of favelas for this social inclusion:

> Personal legitimacy, not land or housing legitimacy, is what is at stake in the city. As long as favelas residents are perceived as marginals, no urbanistic upgrading, skills training, or police reform will succeed in integrating the *morro* and the *asfalto*, the favela and the bairro. There are no tested policies for how to extend personhood to include the poor. The passport to urban citizenship should be a right, not a privilege of the rich, but that is not yet the case.
>
> (Pearlman 2010:310)

On one occasion Mr. Altair summarized their struggle in the following way: "[our struggle] is not about land or houses…of course we want that but the reason why we don't want their housing project is because we don't want to agree with their understanding that we are not worthy of the same rights as them…". Vila Autódromo is indeed a symbol of resistance and fight for equality in the country of inequality. The history of Brazil is founded in the colonial mind-sett, exploratory and authoritarian, leading to the formation of a society that is deeply divided between rich and poor. Rio is the city that best represents this duality, which is expressed in the concrete borders of its favelas. The favelas have a visual effect that shows an internal social reality – the social and economic inequality in Brazil. When a community as Vila Autódromo does not accept to be handled by an authoritarian State and

mobilizes to resist its further exclusion, they are in practice confronting the unfair relations that builds an unequal country; they are striping down the interests behind public policies that benefit an elite; they are making the democratic values practical and real. Democracy should work to build a more equal society, where all citizens of a country should share the same rights and be entitled to the same public services. However, this goes beyond open elections – it means to take hold of the democratic laws to make democracy happen.

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