Local content and embeddedness on the internet: Following the texts and practices of bloggers from a Brazilian favela

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Abstract

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This thesis considers how residents of a favela (shantytown) in the city of Rio de Janeiro in Brazil use the internet to publish and disseminate content, particularly on blogs, which puts forward their own representations of the area where they live. The interdisciplinary and ethnographically inspired approach taken in this thesis links content published on blogs to the practices involved in its publication and circulation, in a wider 'communicative ecology' of local content creation incorporating other internet platforms, as well as print media. The emergence of web 2.0 has widened the possibilities for the production of local content by ordinary people, at the same time as it has paved the way for a broader understanding and application of the term 'local content', outside of projects which include the publication and dissemination of such content as a goal. Whilst place remains a crucially important reference in people's use of the internet, the internet is also a medium through which to explore and develop affiliations which go beyond place. This thesis includes a critical and theoretical exploration of what the 'local' means in the context of the internet, and draws on networked theories of place and locality. It proposes that local content can be understood as the expression of a potentially plural and diverse ecology of locality constructed around (and by) individuals, incorporating multiple locations and interests.

Sectors of Brazilian society, and in particular the mainstream media, tend to homogenise favelas and to portray them as territories of violence, crime and poverty, which are not recognised as part of the official city. These dominant representations remain an important reference which favela residents attempt to work against when producing their own content. Favela residents publishing internet content with an awareness of its potential translocal visibility are thus particularly concerned with place, and with the affirmation of the territorial embeddedness of their content as a way of combatting the stigmatisation of their neighbourhoods. The thesis presents three detailed case studies focusing on the work of specific content creators from the same Rio de Janeiro favela, showing how they employ different practices to explicitly anchor their content in a particular geographical location, at the same time as they affirm the favela where they live as an integral part of the city, which is also connected to other favelas and urban periphery neighbourhoods through shared perspectives and concerns.

This local content can be understood as part of a broader trend towards the increased visibility of the Brazilian urban periphery in recent years, both as a result of projects set up by non-governmental organisations, and independent cultural production by favela residents. Whilst the internet, and digital technologies more broadly speaking, have been an important factor in this visibility, this thesis argues that despite the innovative and dynamic nature of Brazilian digital culture, and the rising levels of internet access by favela residents in Rio de Janeiro, a more nuanced assessment of the effects and implications of digital culture is required. Access to the internet by favela residents in Rio de Janeiro and their use of this medium for the publication and dissemination of more diverse (self-)representations of favelas has challenged some hierarchies, but by no means removed them. The empirical insights provided by this thesis show how a local content approach, which is both conceptual and methodological, can shed new light on internet practices and representations of the local within a specific context.

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During my time as a doctoral student, I have presented my work at several conferences, such as the Association of Internet Researchers annual conference and a workshop organised by the Media Anthropology Network in 2008, the Latin American Studies Association (LASA) conference in 2009, the Society of Latin American Studies (SLAS) annual conference and the Hybrid Storyspaces conference in 2010, and the SLAS conference and International Conference on Latin American Cybercultural Studies in 2011, and this has been an invaluable experience. The comments and feedback received at those events, as well as at departmental presentation days for postgraduate students at SOCLAS in Liverpool have also helped to shape this thesis.

Finally, on a more personal note, my PhD journey has involving constant coming and going between Liverpool and Rio de Janeiro, so the phrase I use to describe my methodology, 'following the content', also accurately describes the research and learning process as a whole. The practical and emotional dimensions of this mobility were sometimes challenging, but family and friends helped to make things easier by providing me with places to stay and helping me to move my luggage around! Fellow PhD students in Liverpool also welcomed me whenever I appeared. Most of all, though, I am grateful to Augusto for his patience and good humour during so many absences and so many long distance telephone calls.

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Introduction

This doctoral thesis considers how residents of a favela (shantytown) in the city of Rio de Janeiro in Brazil use the internet to publish and disseminate content, particularly on blogs,[1] which puts forward their own representations of the area where they live. Such content is approached as an example of 'local content', but the emphasis in this thesis on individual content creators rather than institutionally-supported initiatives and projects means that local content is understood not as 'the expression of the locally owned and adapted knowledge' of a geographical, linguistic or thematic community, as in an early formulation of the term (Ballantyne 2002: 2), but rather as the expression of a potentially plural and diverse ecology of locality constructed around (and by) individuals, incorporating multiple locations and interests. This reinterpretation is informed by networked theories of place and locality which acknowledge that places have plural meanings and are connected to other places in a multitude of ways, that people may identify with more than one place and empirical scale of locality at the same time, and that locality may be produced not only in geographical locations, but also by people in dispersed locations who come together, with the help of digital technologies, around a shared concern or interest. The empirical material presented in this thesis shows how local content can reveal the connections and flows which exist between these different scales or contexts of locality (whether place-based or otherwise) in the work of individual content creators.

This reworked understanding of the concept at the heart of this thesis – indeed, the concept that inspired the research in the first place – also responds to the emergence of tools such as blogs. They are part of a generation of interactive internet platforms often known collectively as 'web 2.0' (O'Reilly 2005), in order to 'distinguish contemporary social media [...] from their immediate predecessors, the static Web pages and message forums that had characterized what was retroactively dubbed Web 1.0' (Coleman 2010: 489). These social media platforms, which require less specialist technical knowledge than some previous approaches to internet content creation and are usually freely available, have widened the possibilities for the production of local content on the internet by ordinary people. It is this 'user-generated content' that has stimulated a broader understanding and application of the term 'local content'. In this research, therefore, I have approached local content produced by favela

[1] A blog is 'a frequently updated webpage, typically consisting of fairly brief posts presented and archived in reverse-chronological order. Blog posts are primarily textual, but may include photos and other multimedia content' (Schiano et al 2004: 1143).

residents not just as representation of place, but also as an entry point to an encounter with, and a critical exploration of, the very idea of the 'local' in the context of the internet and contemporary digital culture.[2] Recognising that the internet is characterised by 'an unprecedented interlinking of local spaces' (Gordon 2008: n.p.), I suggest that it can also be understood as a 'translocal communication circuit' (adapting an assertion by Michael Peter Smith (2002: 110)),[3] in which internet content has potential visibility and mobility beyond the local context in which it was originally published. However, the translocality of internet content representing place, in other words its often explicit reference to the connections that exist between places, can also be seen as a reflection of the fundamental translocality of place itself.

The focus on local content in this thesis reflects broader trends towards a 'more local' internet (Davies & Crabtree 2004 cited in Postill 2008: 414 and Walker & Wehner 2009: 2) as access grows worldwide. This diversification, or 'localization' (Postill 2008: 413) of users, languages, practices, platforms and content, and a recognition of the different types of localities produced and expressed through the internet, has increasingly attracted the attention of researchers (for example, Ito 1999; Miller & Slater 2000; Hine 2000; Gordon 2008; Postill 2008; Dutton 2010), and this thesis thus engages with, and contributes to, an emerging – if still dispersed – literature on different aspects of this development. User-generated local content constitutes a centrally important dimension of the trend towards a more local internet given that, as Christine Hine (2000: 38) has pointed out, internet users are involved in constructing the internet through the content they produce. My research provides empirical insights which show how a local content approach (both conceptual and methodological) sheds new light on internet practices and representations of the local within a specific context. It also makes a theoretical contribution to the literature on locality on the internet.

Existing empirical work on local content creation (or in this case, content relating to a particular geographic location, produced by the people who live there, given that the term

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[2] It is difficult to find a coherent definition of digital culture. I have preferred this term over alternatives like cyberculture because *cultura digital* is a widely used term in Brazil when referring to anything relating to new media practices (although it also refers to a specific policy implemented by Gilberto Gil when he was the country's minister of culture, which I discuss briefly in chapter 3). Deuze (2006: 63) has described digital culture as 'an underdetermined praxis', which consists of 'participation, remediation, and bricolage'. Overall, he defines it as 'an emerging set of values, practices and expectations regarding the way people (should) act within the contemporary network society', which also has roots in 'trends and developments predating the World Wide Web'.

[3] Smith used the word 'transnational' rather than 'translocal' to describe the internet. See pages 27-29 in chapter 1 for a discussion of this terminology.

'local content' is not always used), has tended to be principally focused on project settings (Tacchi 2005; Tacchi, Watkins & Keerthirathne 2009; Bruns & Humphreys 2010), or at least on content published on platforms or sites explicitly set up or customised for the collective sharing of such content (Button & Partridge 2007; Walker & Wehner 2009). My own research considers local content created by individuals from the same neighbourhood, but which is dispersed across different internet platforms and sites of content creation, and not aggregated or consistently linked in any way. My study of favela residents' independently-produced representations of their own neighbourhoods, and their use of blogs and other platforms for the publication and dissemination of those representations, therefore fills a gap in the literatures on blogging, on favelas and their representation, and on internet use by Brazilians from the urban peripheries.

When Brazilian favela residents, such as those whose activities are discussed in this thesis, create and publish representations of their neighbourhoods on the internet, they engage with and offer alternatives to mainstream representations which tend to have the effect of marginalising and homogenising these areas of Rio de Janeiro. Brazilian (and international) media coverage, for example, often stigmatises favelas in its portrayal of them primarily as territories of violence and crime, overlooking the many other aspects of life in these neighbourhoods. This representational trend both reflects and reinforces the perception by many Brazilian policymakers and non-favela residents, especially those living in exclusive neighbourhoods of Rio de Janeiro, that favelas are somehow not really part of the city, and that no translocal flows connect favelas to other neighbourhoods. Favelas are also often erroneously perceived and portrayed as the locus of urban poverty in Rio de Janeiro (Valladares 2005: 151), when in actual fact, 'not all of Rio's poor live in *favelas*, and not all *favelados* are poor' (Perlman 2004: 128; emphasis in original).[4] Although there is rarely consensus on statistics relating to favelas, not least because of discrepancies in how favelas are defined by the different bodies responsible for data collection, favelas were home to 19% of the population of Rio de Janeiro in 2000 (Perlman 2010: 52),[5] and the number of people living in the city's favelas is currently estimated at around 1.3 million (IETS 2004; Souza e Silva 2007: 96), out of an overall population of 6.3 million (UOL n.d.).[6] Both favelas themselves and their residents are highly diversified socially, economically, and culturally.

[4] *Favelado* means favela resident, but the term is often used pejoratively.

[5] This figure comes from the Brazilian census of 2000. Although a census was again carried out in 2010, full data has not yet been released. One estimate for 2010 suggests that the percentage of favela residents may have risen to 21% (IETS 2004).

[6] The 2000 census put the favela population at just under 1.1 million (Perlman 2010: 52). The overall figure for the population of Rio de Janeiro is from the 2010 census.

Reflecting a national trend, Rio's favelas, like other neighbourhoods, have also recently seen the growth of a new Brazilian lower middle class with increased purchasing power and an appetite for household and electronic goods, including computers and mobile phones, as well as access to the internet.[7]

In recent years, favelas – and some of their residents – have gained increased cultural visibility in Brazil and beyond. In some cases such visibility has perpetuated both positive and negative stereotypes about favelas, through mainstream productions like the 2002 film *Cidade de Deus* (City of God), which in turn influence the expectations of the increasing numbers engaging in favela tourism (Freire-Medeiros 2011). However, film, music, literature, photography and other works produced by favela residents – and more broadly speaking by residents of urban periphery neighbourhoods in Brazil (the '*periferia*') – have also multiplied. Their production, dissemination and sometimes wide circulation have much to do with increased access to digital technologies, including the internet, in Brazil. The country has a dynamic and innovative digital culture, and levels of access to the internet in its urban areas almost doubled in the five years from 2005 to 2010, rising from 24% to 45% (CETIC.br 2006, 2011a).[8] Brazilian internet users are also known for their intensive and innovative use of the growing range of web 2.0 platforms available to support the production of user-generated content on the internet, although there are some variations in the practices of different socioeconomic groups in this regard. While overall figures for internet use in Brazil continue to mirror socioeconomic and regional inequalities, the recent increases in access to the internet specifically by favela residents,[9] have allowed for the emergence and dissemination of more diverse user-generated content about favelas on blogs, social network sites,[10]

[7] This new middle class, known as *classe C* in Brazil, is defined in economic terms. Its growth has been most striking since 2003, but dates back to the early 1990s. In 1992, 34.96% of the Brazilian population was considered *classe C*, and by 2009 this had risen to 50.5%, or 94.9 million people (Secretaria de Assuntos Estratégicos 2011).

[8] Internet users were defined as those who had used the internet in the last three months. Figures for rural areas were first made available in 2009, so the urban figures are used here to allow the comparison over a five-year period. For more on these surveys see chapter 3.

[9] The only survey of internet use by favela residents in Rio, conducted in 2003, found that 11.6% of them used the internet, a figure close to the national average of the time (Sorj & Guedes 2005: 4-5, 9). The national figure for 2010 was 41% (CETIC.br 2011b), suggesting that if the same correlation has been maintained, the current level of internet access by favela residents in Rio is likely to have increased significantly.

[10] Social network sites are 'web-based services that allow individuals to (1) construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, (2) articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and (3) view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system' (boyd & Ellison 2007). Examples of social network sites include Orkut, which has been particularly popular in Brazil over the past seven years, and Facebook, which is now experiencing growth in the country.

microblogs[11] and other platforms, whether oriented to the sharing of 'localised everyday life information' (Button & Partridge 2007: 1) or the more structured representations of favelas constructed with an awareness of a potential external audience, which are analysed in this thesis.

In some cases, the cultural expressions of favela residents mentioned above have emerged thanks to the support of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and social movements which have established projects to offer more realistic and diverse representations of these spaces, including on the internet. However, many of these cultural expressions are also the outcome of personal and collective initiatives, developed independently. This thesis considers this latter type of production, largely outside of the scope of institutional projects, and looks particularly at texts and images, and occasionally videos, published and disseminated on the internet by favela residents which explicitly engage with the representation of place. This type of content is part of an 'explosion of place' (Graham 1998) on the internet, which belies early claims that place and locality would diminish in importance in people's use of the internet, as a result of broader social and cultural changes associated with globalisation. Quite to the contrary – as this thesis shows, there is now a whole body of research that reveals not only that people use the internet and associated digital technologies to engage with place, but also that their use of the internet is strongly embedded in their physical location, even if it also allows them to explore and develop connections which go beyond that place. In this regard, increasing use of new information and communication technologies (ICTs) has been one trigger for the development of renewed theoretical understandings of place and locality which are no longer based purely on geographical boundedness.

While this thesis is not focused on a specific type of internet platform to the exclusion of others, it centres its analysis on content published on blogs, chosen here for the more public and visible representations of place which they put forward. In this way the thesis considers 'the media texts of ordinary citizens', which have often been overlooked in scholarship (Rodriguez 2001: 4), but also connects these texts to the practices involved in their production and circulation. Such practices may include the dissemination of blog content using social network sites and microblogs, as well as email and sometimes print formats. The

[11] As the name implies, a microblog is a service which enables users to publish short posts (of up to 140 characters) which are then presented and archived in reverse chronological order. The most popular microblog is Twitter.

study therefore considers how different tools in this broader 'communicative ecology' (Slater, Tacchi & Lewis 2002) of local content production are used to reach different audiences.

The different theoretical and empirical threads in this thesis – the representation of place and the production of locality on and through the internet, and the social, political, and cultural dimensions of the Brazilian favela context – are brought together in the focus on the territorial embeddedness of local content. Here I have adapted Hess's (2004) understanding of territorial embeddedness, a term which originates in economic geography. Reflecting trends towards the 'territorial affirmation' (Ramos 2007) of favelas by social projects and cultural producers, seeking to combat the marginalisation of these neighbourhoods, I found that the local content creators whose work I studied were involved in different practices to explicitly 'anchor' – to use Hess's terminology – their content in a specific geographical location. These included textual and visual referencing of place in the body of content or framing content, use of localised language, the dissemination of content using particular channels or sites and the targeting of particular audiences. However, content creators also used their content to affirm the favela where they live as a networked place, which is outward rather than inward-looking, by foregrounding the connections that exist between it and other favelas and urban periphery neighbourhoods, as well as the city as a whole. By expressing connections and forms of belonging that go beyond a specific favela, they reveal a translocal identity with social, cultural and political significance, but also position that favela, and favelas in general, as an integral part of the city, thereby disavowing perspectives that suggest the opposite.

The approach taken in my research has been fundamentally interdisciplinary, combining approaches from anthropology, cultural studies and new literacy studies as well as the 'interdiscipline[s]' (Silver 2006: 4) of internet studies and – to extend this terminology to another field – Latin American studies. The focus on internet practices *and* internet texts has required methodological and ethical reflexivity and the development of my own version of what Elizabeth Bassett and Kate O'Riordan have termed 'a hybrid model of relational ethics that incorporates text, space and bodies' (2002: 245). I honed this during ethnographically-inspired fieldwork conducted in Rio de Janeiro and on the internet, which lasted for thirteen months. It focused on local content produced by residents of the Complexo da Maré, a group of favelas located in northern Rio, and involved 'following' that content on and across different internet platforms, conducting interviews with its creators, and carrying out textual

and visual analysis of content. Overall, the research sought to answer the following questions:

- How do residents of a Rio de Janeiro favela represent their neighbourhood in public internet content and what tools do they use for publishing and disseminating this content?
- Who is the intended audience for these representations, and how do they differ from mainstream representations of the favela?
- How do content creators territorially embed their content?
- How do these content creators negotiate the translocal visibility afforded by the internet?
- What is the significance of these user-generated representations for understandings of the city of Rio de Janeiro?

With these questions in mind, the structure and content of the thesis is as follows:

Chapter 1 presents the theoretical approach taken in this study, focusing particularly on place, space, locality and embeddedness in the context of the internet, and drawing on the work of scholars who have proposed networked understandings of place and locality. It also provides background on the origins of the term 'local content'. Inspired particularly by the ideas of Arjun Appadurai, the chapter proposes that local content on the internet can be understood as the result of, or part of, imaginative practices associated with the production of locality by individual content creators. Such locality is plural and diverse, and incorporates 'different empirical scales' (Appadurai 2002: 43). As the chapter makes clear, the production and dissemination of local content about favelas is not just a medium for the representation of place but also a technique for the production of locality by their residents, an area of practice in which they can imagine, express and shape the literal and symbolic meanings of their neighbourhood, as physical place and place in the imaginary of the city, as well as explore and develop, through their use of the internet, affiliations and connections which transcend place. However, place and specifically territorial embeddedness are emphasised in this theoretical chapter because they continue to be important references for many people when using the internet, and also constitute such a powerful and divisive form of identification and social classification specifically in Rio de Janeiro, where this research took place.

Chapter 2 covers research methodology and ethics and details the ethnographically inspired 'following the content' approach which lies at the heart of this study, as well as the methodological concepts of the 'content event' and the 'communicative ecology' which were used to connect internet content with the practices involved in its production, publication and

dissemination. The methods used thus responded to the translocality and mobility of local content and enabled me to follow content as it flowed and circulated on a range of platforms and media, both online and offline. The chapter's discussion of research ethics weighs up the specific issues raised by the focus on textual and visual internet content produced by ordinary people from a marginalised urban area, namely the potential traceability of citations from internet content in research write-ups, the tensions between human subjects and textual approaches to the internet, and finally the political and ethical responsibilities of the researcher when dealing with content published with the aim of increasing the visibility of a marginalised group or place. The chapter presents the hybrid, reflexive and responsive approach to ethics and informed consent which was developed to reflect these considerations.

Chapter 3 covers the Brazilian context and is divided into two parts. The first part outlines dominant trends in how favelas have been understood and represented by academics, policymakers and particularly the mainstream media, before turning to an examination of the trend towards increased self-representation and cultural visibility of favela residents and other residents of urban periphery neighbourhoods, including through internet-based projects set up by NGOs. As the chapter shows, mainstream representations of favelas, and particularly their prevailing emphasis on violence and crime, remain an important reference which favela residents attempt to work against in their own content. In the second part of the chapter, the focus shifts to the internet and digital culture in Brazil and particularly existing data and research on internet access and use in favelas, which are situated in the context of national policy and trends. The chapter ends with a brief introduction to the Complexo da Maré favela where my research was carried out. Whilst the internet, and digital technologies more broadly speaking, have been an important factor in the increased visibility of the Brazilian periphery in recent years, there has been only limited research so far on this topic. The chapter identifies the need for a nuanced assessment of the effects and implications of digital culture, suggesting that access to the internet by favela residents has challenged some hierarchies, but by no means removed them.

Chapter 4 presents the first of three empirical case studies looking at the work of individual content creators from Complexo da Maré. This chapter considers a specific text, putting forward a Maré resident's personal response to a conflict between rival groups of drug traffickers, which was originally published on a group blog and then reposted on other blogs and websites by its author and other internet users, as well as being disseminated on Twitter,

social network sites, email and in print. Although the text itself foregrounds its territorial embeddedness, it also places a localised conflict in a wider context and demonstrates reflexivity in its representation of a violent episode in favela life. The analysis of this text and the broader content event generated by its publication draws on Ken Maclean's (2008) work on reposting and John Bryant's (2002) 'fluid text' approach to show how the translocal visibility and mobility of internet content means it is potentially subject to varied, and unpredictable, interpretations and transformations. Whilst the locality and territorial embeddedness of this text, as well as its authorship, were affected by its mobility through reposting and other forms of dissemination, it also remained strongly localised and embedded through its author's choice of language, and the dissemination channels he used to target specific audiences who could be considered local to it in some way. The chapter concludes that although the internet can be used to amplify the reach and visibility of local content, the trajectory and composite meaning of such 'travelling texts' may be hard to follow.

Chapter 5 presents a case study centred on the self-publication activities, both on the internet and in print, of another resident of Maré who has also become involved in promoting literary works by other residents of favelas and urban periphery neighbourhoods, reflecting the increased visibility of what is known as 'marginal literature' in Brazil. The chapter discusses how 'framing content' on one of the blogs maintained by this student and writer is used to territorially embed her literary texts, even when they do not represent identifiable geographical places, and also to affirm the cultural capital of the favela. Detailed analysis of a specific example of sidebar content reveals how the creator of the blog uses it to affirm her identity not just as a resident of Maré, but also as a resident of Rio, thereby evidencing how content creators are engaged in a symbolic remapping and resignification of urban space which counters the homogenisation and marginalisation of favelas in mainstream representations and positions them within the city. The second half of the chapter considers the practices involved in disseminating and promoting print publications on the internet and face-to-face and then concludes with an exploration of how a writing competition set up by this blogger, originally targeted at residents of Maré, took on an increasingly translocal orientation towards a diverse but shared identity associated with the *periferia*. This competition thus represents another approach used by the blogger to frame and embed her own work and that of other writers from favelas, suburbs, and the urban periphery, linking them in a collective affirmation of urban territory and of an identity which is both spatial and not directly linked to place.

Chapter 6, the final case study, examines a relatively long-standing blog maintained by a resident of Maré who is originally from the north-east of Brazil, and focuses its discussion more generally on the nature of blogging as a medium for representing favelas, rather than providing close analysis of a single blog post as in chapter 4. However, the chapter also considers specific examples of content produced by this blogger, such as a series of photographs taken with a mobile phone, a cluster of posts reflecting place-based activism against the building of walls around favelas, and the curation of historical videos about Maré on his blog and on YouTube. The chapter reveals how the thematic focus of the blog in question has evolved over time from an original focus on photographs of everyday life in Maré to broader, multimedia coverage of everyday life in the city of Rio with a particular interest in favelas, which occasionally weaves in content about the Brazilian north-east, whilst still remaining distinctly oriented to Maré. In this way, this case study uses the concept of the 'placeworld' (Gordon & Koo 2008) to illustrate how the particular context of the locality of a blog is constructed through the intersection of its creator's interests and intentions, which may shift and evolve, as well as evidencing embeddedness in multiple contexts. The chapter reports on how this blogger tackles the complexities of favela representation, locating his work between negative and positive extremes and emphasising everyday life, as well as how he negotiates the translocal visibility and multiple audiences for content, both local and non-local, which are possible on the internet.

Chapter 1: Rethinking place, locality and embeddedness on the internet

Introduction

This theoretical chapter situates local content, and particularly local content involving the representation of place, in relation to debates about place, space, locality and embeddedness in the context of the internet. It draws on networked theories of place and locality and shows how 'contemporary forms of communication can transform our sense of what is "local" into widely distributed networks' (Hammersley & Atkinson 2007: 138). In line with the focus in this thesis on the ways that ordinary people engage in the 'practice of place' (Walker & Wehner 2009: 2) through creating and publishing local content on the internet, the chapter makes the case for understanding such content as the result of, or part of, imaginative practices associated with the production of locality. In this way, the chapter establishes the basis for approaching the internet-based production and dissemination of local content about favelas not just as a medium for the representation of place, but also as a technique for the production of locality by favela residents.

Although place remains an important reference in people's use of the internet and in the production of locality, even as it is reworked into a more fluid sense of place that recognises that places are connected in a myriad of ways to other places, the internet also provides a medium through which to explore and develop affiliations which go beyond place. I therefore argue that local content offers a way to express the potentially plural and diverse ecologies of locality produced and experienced by individual content creators, incorporating multiple locations and interests. Looking forwards to my empirical case studies, I suggest that local content can be understood as content local to an individual, an expression of his or her embeddedness in more than one setting or context, as well as his or her mobility between these, rather than as content local to a geographical or thematic community as was the case in Peter Ballantyne's (2002) original definition of the term. However, the territorial stigma attached to Rio de Janeiro's favelas in mainstream representations means that the expression of a specifically territorial embeddedness is particularly significant in the local content I discuss in this thesis, as a way of combatting that stigma, and this aspect of embeddedness is thus given particular emphasis here.

The chapter begins by examining contemporary understandings of place and space, not directly linked to the internet, and shows that contrary to predictions of their demise as a result of globalisation, these concepts continue to be crucially important and relevant, although they have been rethought in response to the social, cultural and economic changes of recent decades. The chapter then looks more closely at how place and space have been approached by internet studies thus far, focusing particularly on the representation of place on the internet. After this, the focus of the chapter shifts to the production of locality, drawing extensively on the work of anthropologist Arjun Appadurai, in which locality is understood not as a synonym for place, but rather as a 'structure of feeling' (1996: 189, 2002: 34), a quality that may be materialised both in geographical places or in electronically mediated settings which allow for the participation of people in different locations. With particular reference to the work of Mimi Ito (1999) and Eric Gordon (2008), I consider how locality has been reframed as 'network locality' to reflect how the meaning and experience of locality is shifting in response to increased use of ICTs in everyday life, as well as broader sociocultural changes, although again the ongoing importance of place is emphasised.

I then look in more detail at Appadurai's ideas about the role of the imagination in the production of locality, before introducing the term 'translocal' and exploring how it can be used to signal the way that internet content about a particular place may also express connections, interfaces and overlaps between places and place-based identities. Indeed, I suggest that this translocal quality of internet content can be seen as a reflection of the fundamental translocality of both place and the internet itself. Drawing on my discussion of network locality and translocality, I propose that despite their diversity, favelas can be understood as constitutive of a networked form of locality, reflected in the way that local content produced by favela residents sometimes highlights common issues and perspectives linking these neighbourhoods. I introduce the concept of the 'placeworld' (Gordon & Koo 2008) as a way of thinking about how the scope of what is 'local' can shift in response to events and the intentions of content creators, reflecting different scales and contexts of locality.

In the following section, I present the background to the term 'local content' and its origins in international policy discussions about the internet and development, and show its ongoing applicability and vitality in the age of web 2.0 to refer to content generated by ordinary people, outside of the scope of institutionally-supported projects. I argue that the emergence of web 2.0 has both widened the possibilities for the production of local content, including

that which represents place, and broadened how the term can be understood and applied. Finally, the chapter turns to a detailed examination of the concept of embeddedness. I focus principally on one particular variant of embeddedness, territorial embeddedness, which I use as a theoretical foundation for considering the different ways in which content creators 'anchor' their content in place, adapting arguments made by Hess (2004). I also briefly review recent research which highlights territorial embeddedness in internet content produced in different contexts. In my own research into content creation by Brazilian favela residents, the assertion and affirmation of a connection to geographical place, the production of place-based locality, and its representation in internet content take on a particular significance. For this reason, reflecting its theoretical and empirical centrality in the thesis, the chapter now begins with a discussion of place.

From place to networked place

In scholarly discourse, place and space have a tendency to appear as twin concepts, in that they often go together, even being rendered jointly as 'place/space' despite the fact that they do not mean the same thing (nor do they have fixed or stable meanings), and are not interchangeable. I begin this section by attempting to disentangle place from space, before moving to a more detailed theoretical discussion of place and how this relates to the internet. Place, and to a lesser extent space, are of interest here not just because of the focus in this thesis on the representation of place in internet content, but also because they have been key concerns in theoretical and empirical discussions about the internet from the outset. The aim is thus to situate contemporary practices of the representation of place in internet content in a wider context, both in relation to the development of the 'interdiscipline' of internet studies (Silver 2006: 4) – and the internet itself –, and to contemporary ways of understanding place.

In discussing definitions of place, cultural geographer Tim Cresswell (2004: 1) has drawn attention to the familiar, and therefore 'slippery', nature of place, arguing that 'no-one quite knows what they are talking about when they are talking about place'. He explains that place is perhaps most commonly and straightforwardly defined as 'a meaningful location', but that although located, places are not always stationary (Cresswell 2004: 7). He also emphasises the material aspect of places, noting that even imaginary places have this dimension, and points to the emotional and subjective relationships we develop with place, encapsulated in Agnew's idea of a 'sense of place' (1987 cited in Cresswell 2004: 7).

Feminist geographer Doreen Massey (1994: 146) has also developed influential work on a sense of place, in response to 'increasing anxiety about what we mean by "places" and how we relate to them'. She notes that in the context of globalisation and so-called time-space compression, a defence of place has sometimes been interpreted as necessarily reactionary. However, she argues that this perspective arises from an incorrect understanding of places as having single, essential identities, as well as the assumption that a sense of place results from looking inwards and to the past, and drawing boundaries. In calling for a 'global sense of place', which recognises the ongoing relevance and importance of place as a reference point, Massey (1994: 155) emphasises instead its interactive, porous, diverse and dynamic nature, pointing out that 'places are processes too'. As she writes,

> In this interpretation, what gives a place its specificity is not some long internalized history but the fact that it is constructed out of a particular constellation of social relations, meeting and weaving together at a particular locus. If one moves in from the satellite towards the globe,[12] holding all those networks of social relations and movements and communications in one's head, then each 'place' can be seen as particular, unique, point of their intersection. It is, indeed, a *meeting* place. Instead, then, of thinking of places as areas with boundaries around, they can be imagined as articulated moments in networks of social relations and understandings, but where a large proportion of those relations, experiences and understandings are constructed on a far larger scale than what we happen to define for that moment as the place itself, whether that be a street, or a region or even a continent. And this in turn allows a sense of place which is extroverted, which includes a consciousness of its links with the wider world, which integrates in a positive way the global and the local. (Massey 1994: 154-155; emphasis in original)

If one accepts Massey's contention that places are the sum of 'social relations and movements and communications', and are intrinsically interconnected to other places, then it follows that one should also be alert to these links and convergences when considering how residents of a particular place represent and portray it in content published on the internet. Indeed, the internet, with the representational and informational content it carries about a place, as well as the communicative activity it facilitates (alongside other technologies) between people in that place and with people in other places, can be understood as a part of the threads that intertwine to constitute a sense of place, in which non-material, imaginative dimensions of place also have a central importance. Geographer Mark Graham, who uses the term 'genius loci' to refer to 'the sense and spirit of places' (2010: 435), has argued that the 'genius loci of many places (for those with online access), now potentially becomes shaped by both physical and virtual elements of the palimpsest of place' (2010: 426). As I suggest in this thesis, the internet content about favelas produced by favela residents

[12] In Massey's essay, she invites readers to consider the view of the earth from a far-off satellite and develops her understanding of place from this perspective, zooming in on place (she uses the example of Kilburn in north London).

contributes to the availability of more diverse representations of these neighbourhoods, and therefore affects their 'genius loci', but the overall representational context surrounding favelas remains challenging.

Turning now briefly to space, this concept originating in human geography has been increasingly taken up by scholars in a range of other disciplines in the social sciences and humanities, resulting in what has become known as a 'spatial turn' (Warf & Arias 2009). This has led to the term being used and interpreted in a variety of ways, as Warf and Arias explain:

> Far from the traditional, Cartesian notion of space as a set of physical places, contemporary thought throughout the social sciences and humanities reveals it as a variegated, complex, often bewildering series of different types of locations: physical, mythological, symbolic, imagined, linguistic, cartographic, perceptual, representational, i.e. space as suspended between matter and meaning. (2009: 9-10)

In a more straightforward attempt at definition, Cresswell (2004: 8) argues that space 'is a more abstract concept than place', often thought of as having 'areas and volumes'. Nonetheless, he suggests that the concepts are inter-related and inter-dependent, drawing on the following reflections by geographer Yi-Fu Tuan:

> What begins as undifferentiated space becomes place as we get to know it better and endow it with value.... The ideas 'space' and 'place' require each other for definition. From the security and stability of place we are aware of the openness, freedom, and threat of space, and vice versa. Furthermore, if we think of space as that which allows movement, then place is pause; each pause in movement makes it possible for location to be transformed into place. (1977: 6 cited in Cresswell 2004: 8)

However, despite the connections between space and place alluded to by Tuan, the two concepts have often been approached differently by scholars. Informed by the work of philosopher Edward Casey (1993, 1995, 1997 cited in Escobar 2001: 140-143), Arturo Escobar (2001: 143) has argued that place has long been neglected in Western theory and social science, which 'has enshrined space as the absolute, unlimited and universal, while banning place to the realm of the particular, the limited, the local, and the bound'. Despite the dominance of space, however, there has always been some interest in place in these academic fields, and Escobar (2001: 143) points to the emergence and ongoing construction of a common 'anti-essentialist notion of place, an interest in finding place at work, place being constructed, imagined, and struggled over'. This anti-essentialist approach to place is of use in thinking about how content creators engage with place on and through the internet, not least because in many ways they are engaged in precisely the activities which Escobar attributes to theorists of place. Indeed, Dana Walker and Patrick Wehner (2009: 3) have described how participants in the local internet discussion forum they studied in Philadelphia

in the United States were engaged in 'the practice of place' as they shared personal knowledge and impressions, and constructed 'the distinctness and diversity of the city and its neighborhoods'.

As the work of Massey discussed above implies, a more recent threat to the visibility of place in scholarship and practice has come from globalisation, or rather, discourses about globalisation. Indeed, some of the emerging approaches to place referred to by Escobar are responses to the way, as he describes it, that place 'has dropped out of sight in the "globalization craze" of recent years' (2001: 141). In the early 1990s, for example, Anthony Giddens predicted that place was set to become 'increasingly *phantasmagoric*' (1991: 19; emphasis in original).[13] The view that place would lose its importance was also present in Manuel Castells' work on the network society; he predicted that 'a new spatial logic that I label *space of flows*' would take over from 'the historically rooted spatial organization of our common experience: *the space of places*' (2000: 408-409; emphasis in original).[14] However, Castells' either-or, binary position, in which places give way to flows, has been critiqued by some scholars, who have argued instead that attention should be paid to the tensions or relations *between* places and flows (Escobar 2001; Leander & McKim 2003). As Eric Gordon and Gene Koo (2008: 208) assert, 'the rise of networks does not, in fact, signal the fall of places. It turns out that the very stuff of society is not the space of flows. [...] In other words, a networked society can both encourage flows and reinforce places'.[15]

As such comments show, while many useful ideas about (and rethinkings of) place come, unsurprisingly, from human geography, there have also been what Escobar (2001: 141) labels 'productive and important' critiques of place within cultural studies, anthropology and communications, similar to the engagement of scholars from a range of disciplines with the idea of space outlined above. In this way, the '[n]ew spatial concepts and metaphors of mobility' (Escobar 2001: 141) associated with globalisation have helped to stimulate

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[13] Giddens was actually discussing modernity, rather than globalisation, when he defined disembedding in this way. However, there are strong similarities in his formulation to many ideas about globalisation, which justifies the use of this definition here.

[14] Similar binaries are also very much present in early academic approaches to the internet and its relation to space and place, as scholars have noted (Graham 1998; Silver 2000; Crang, Crosbie & Graham 2007). If Massey (1994: 196) has noted that the work of authors writing about time-space compression is characterised by 'the almost obligatory use in the literature of terms and phrases such as speed-up, global village, overcoming spatial barriers, the disruption of horizons, and so on', such terms and phrases are just as prevalent, if not more so, in writing on the internet, as I discuss on the following pages.

[15] Brazilian scholar André Lemos' concept of the 'informational territory', developed in relation to mobile communication and locative media, also incorporates places *and* flows. As Lemos (2008: 96) notes, informational territory 'is not cyberspace, but the territory in a place formed by the relationship between the physical dimensions of territorialities and the new electronic flows, creating a new form of territorialization'.

questions about the meaning of place and engendered efforts to adapt the concept to cultural, social and economic changes and developments, including the emergence of the internet. Similarly, Warf and Arias (2009: 5) note that contrary to predictions, globalisation has increased the importance of space and geography, and that the internet (or cyberspace) in particular has raised important issues relating to how spatiality is understood. The critiques of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries have thus altered our understanding of place (and space), but at the same time, place has reasserted its ongoing importance and vitality. As Gielis (2009: 275) notes in his overview of what he terms a 'placial turn', echoing the 'spatial turn' already mentioned above, '[n]owadays, the social sciences broadly support the notion that places are not just local but also connected to the wider world'. Place not only attracts more attention than before, but is also now understood in a more 'open, emotional and networked' (Bosco 2006: 359) way than was previously the case.

A similar trajectory, moving from initial predictions that place would fade away, to a recognition of its ongoing, but sometimes reconfigured, significance, can also be observed in academic approaches to the internet. While attention to historical and social contexts and cultural difference may now be considered a characteristic of research on the internet – revealing a trend towards what Silver (2000, 2006) has termed 'critical cybercultural studies' – this was often not the case in earlier stages of the development of this 'interdiscipline'. According to Silver, it began with 'popular cyberculture' before passing through 'cyberculture studies'. In the former, which was responsible for the generation of metaphors which are only gradually being dismantled, the internet, or cyberspace, was considered 'a new frontier of civilization, a digital domain that would bring down big business, foster democratic participation, and end economic and social inequities' (Silver 2000: n.p.). Similarly, Stephen Graham refers to this phase of academic work on the internet as being informed by 'the perspective of *substitution* and *transcendence* — the idea that human territoriality, and the space and place-based dynamics of human life, can somehow be replaced using new technologies' (1998: 167; emphasis in original).

As Graham (1998: 166) also noted, geographical metaphors have been closely associated with new ICTs, and particularly the internet, from the beginning, as a way of making them tangible.[16] However, scholars of digital culture – a concept understood here as 'an emerging set of values, practices and expectations' associated with the use of digital media (Deuze

[16] Examples collated by Graham include website, information superhighway, virtual community, electronic neighbourhood, electronic frontier, web surfers, electronic library, electronic mail, digital marketplace.

2006: 63)[17] – have argued that acceptance of such metaphors, rather than dialogue or critical engagement with them, has stood in the way of a better, more nuanced understanding of what actually happens to place and space in their encounters and interactions with the internet (Graham 1998; Barta-Smith & Hathaway 2000). Indeed, countering original claims or discourses about the disembeddedness of the internet, as an 'e-topian' world apart (Crawford 2003 cited in Sterne 2006: 17), one analysis of early ethnographies of the internet suggested they together showed that 'the emerging social spaces of Internet practices are complexly interpenetrated with social spaces considered to be "before" and "outside of" the Internet' (Leander & McKim 2003: 218).

The approach taken in my research is therefore consistent with work which recognises the existence of 'complex articulations between the local and global dynamics of both material places and electronic spaces', as discussed by Graham (1998: 174), although my own focus is more on the local and the translocal, as I explain below. Indeed, the first half of the title of Graham's article, 'The end of geography or the explosion of place?'[18] seems particularly apt in the present context. Although in the late 1990s it could already be said of the internet that 'much of the traffic actually *represents* real places and spaces' (Graham 1998: 173; emphasis in original), this representation of physical places on the internet has become particularly marked in recent years in the context of the emergence of web 2.0. Whilst Stephen Graham, cited above, associated the frequent representation of place on the internet in the 1990s with the mobility of early adopters from elite groups, the growth in internet access in the intervening years and its increasingly diversified users, both in terms of geographical origins and socioeconomic background, suggests that the places represented on the internet will have become more varied. The emergence of user-generated content representing marginalised urban places such as Brazilian favelas from the perspective of their residents can be seen indicative of this trend, and also reflects the popularity of web 2.0 in Brazil. However, as well as the growth in the representation of place on the internet more broadly speaking, there have also been specific developments in the area of mapping.

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[17] Deuze's definition of digital culture emphasises the continuity with practices that existed before the advent of the web. As I noted in a footnote on page 2 of the introduction to this thesis, I prefer the term 'digital culture' over alternatives like 'cyberculture' as it more easily embraces other digital media, therefore fitting with my communicative ecology approach. For Karaganis (2007: 15), digital culture is 'about the transformation of what it means to be a person or a cultural actor located within a vast and growing reservoir of media, data, computational power, and communicative possibilities'. For a Brazilian discussion of how to define the term, see Cultura Digital (n.d.)

[18] The phrase 'geographical explosion of place' comes from Staple (1993), cited by Graham.

In recent work, geographer Mark Graham (2010: 423) has drawn attention to the emergence of specific platforms which enable and support the engagement of '[h]undreds of thousands of writers, cartographers, designers, technicians, engineers, photographers and artists [in] creating digital representations of the physical world'. Such platforms include what Graham terms 'virtual globes' (services such as Google Maps and Google Earth), 'wiki-locals' (Wikipedia, Wikimapia, Wikitravel), and OpenStreetMap.[19] Graham (2010: 425) argues, therefore, that 'it was precisely the paradigm shift to Web 2.0 that allowed the production and representation of geography and the sense and spirit of places [...] to move into the hands of the masses on the Internet'. Indeed, it is my contention in this thesis that the emergence of web 2.0 has both widened the possibilities for the production of local content, including that which represents place, and broadened how the term can be understood and applied, building on the original definition put forward by Ballantyne. In recent years the media and academic researchers have paid increasing attention to the availability of local information and news on the internet (and more latterly, the mobile internet), and the terms 'hyperlocal'[20] and 'locative media' have gained in currency (Button & Patridge 2007; Dutton 2010; A. Lemos 2010). Another trend has been the emergence of 'placeblogging', whether as individual undertaking or collectively aggregated project (Lindgren 2005; Hardey 2007; Walker & Wehner 2009). In 2009, the *Guardian* newspaper's website asked, 'Is local the new social now?' (PDA The Digital Content Blog 2009), suggesting that locally oriented platforms and services on the internet might be experiencing the hype previously attached to social media.

Engagement with physical place and its representation through local content published on the internet are central to my research, but the content I have considered is not published on platforms such as those mentioned by Mark Graham. Rather, it is dispersed across mainly personal sites of content creation, and mainly not aggregated with other local content or other content relating to place, although some ad hoc linking can be observed. In addition, it does not directly incorporate mapping or geotagging of other types of content, although the empirical chapters of this thesis show that the local content produced by favela residents and published on blogs, social network sites and other web 2.0 platforms can also be considered

[19] Local discussion forums are excluded from this categorisation only because there is no centralised hub pulling together such data, although Graham (2010: 433 n.2) recognises they do constitute a source of information for virtual globes.

[20] Metzgar et al (2011: 774) argue there is no agreed definition for 'hyperlocal' and propose their own for discussion (whilst conceived in a US context, they hope it has broader relevance): 'Hyperlocal media organizations are geographically-based, community-oriented, original-news-reporting organizations indigenous to the web and intended to fill perceived gaps in coverage of an issue or region and to promote civic engagement'. They also note that the geographical scope and size of the 'community' covered by such initiatives varies.

a kind of user-generated (re)mapping, as its creators name and represent marginalised urban places, positioning them within the symbolic map of the city.[21] As well as focusing on particular geographical places, the content I have considered also incorporates references to forms of affiliation which are not place-based, or not entirely so,[22] and draws attention to the connections between places (between one favela and other favelas, between favelas and other periphery areas, between favelas and the city), in line with Massey's connective view of place which I discussed above.

In this way, while the neogeographical developments studied by Mark Graham – the 'virtual globes' and 'wiki-locals' – can certainly be considered examples of local content tied to geographical locations, the rise in user-generated local content is also equally relevant to other types of affiliation, not based on place, as I outline in the section on locality later in this chapter. Whether the focus of user-generated content is on place or other areas of interest, web 2.0 tools offer particular functionalities, or particular possibilities for customisation and appropriation which, in theory at least, require less technical skills or knowledge than earlier approaches to publishing on the internet. However, many barriers still remain to the use of such tools by many people, and particularly by members of non-elite social groups. In general, content creation can be a time-intensive process (Hargittai & Walejko 2008) and one that requires 'very particular cultural competencies as well as creative and technological literacies' (Burgess 2006: 205). In addition, the dominance of commercial and proprietary platforms raises issues about the ownership of the content published on them (Bruns & Humphreys 2010: 55), although non-commercial, often free and open source (FOSS) software platforms are also available.[23] Nonetheless, whether commercial or open source, the combination of such tools and the practices, motivations and intentions of content creators making use of them to create, present and circulate content representing place, produce complex and contingent configurations and representations of place, and result in the potentially wider availability and visibility of perspectives which challenge existing mainstream or official representations of those places, as I show in the empirical chapters of this thesis.

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[21] Participatory mapping projects do exist in Brazil and a handful focus on favelas. Chapter 3 mentions one such project in its overview of web-based projects producing content about favelas.

[22] For example, in chapter 5 I consider literature and literary production as a type of locality produced on the internet, as well as the idea of the periphery as a form of identification rooted in place but which also has a socioeconomic dimension.

[23] In FOSS, the source code is made freely available and may be redistributed and modified. FOSS has been a key element of Brazilian government policy in recent years and is discussed in chapter 3. See also Constanza-Chock (2008) for a discussion of the use of web 2.0 platforms and open source alternatives by the immigrant rights movement in the USA.

Given the particular social, cultural and political context in which internet-based representation of favelas by their residents takes place, and the broader 'crisis of representation' (Jaguaribe 2009: 220) affecting favelas and the city of Rio de Janeiro,[24] I understand the production and dissemination of local content about favelas not just as representation of place, but also as a technique for the production of locality by residents, an area of practice in which they can imagine and make visible the literal and symbolic meanings of their neighbourhood, as well as explore and develop, through their use of the internet, affiliations and connections which transcend place. The following section thus presents and discusses theoretical ideas about the production of locality in both spatial and virtual settings, drawing particularly on work by Appadurai, as well as by other scholars who have explored how locality and its production is being reworked in relation to the internet and ICTs more broadly speaking.

The production of (network) locality

Locality, or the quality of being local, is often understood as 'how we experience that which is near' (Gordon 2008: n.p.). The proximity associated with locality has traditionally been interpreted in a very literal, physical sense, and tied to bounded geographical places or settings, both in theoretical approaches and in methodological perspectives on appropriate field sites for anthropological or ethnographic investigation (Hine 2000; Hammersley & Atkinson 2007). However, this conflation between locality and place has gradually been eroded through the emergence of approaches which seek to detach the former from the latter (or question the relationship between the two) and perceive locality instead as something which is constructed and struggled over in different settings, no longer limited to individual geographical locations. This shift in how locality is understood is also linked to the broader critiques of traditional understandings of place itself as bounded and fixed geographical location, which were explored in the first section of this chapter.

A particularly notable reconceptualisation of locality has been put forward by Appadurai, who proposed that it be understood as 'a complex phenomenological quality, constituted by a series of links between the sense of social immediacy, the technologies of interactivity, and the relativity of contexts' (1996: 178). Appadurai mentions house-building and gardening as

[24] This representational crisis, and the contemporary Brazilian context, is discussed in more detail in chapter 3.

examples of technologies for the production of locality, but his main argument is that such technologies or practices have a function beyond the spatial. In this way, he seeks to separate locality as a 'property or dimension of social life' (Appadurai 1996: 204 n.1) from the concrete social forms in which it is manifested, which he refers to as 'neighbourhoods'. Neighbourhoods, in Appadurai's approach, are 'situated communities', but they can be either 'spatial' or 'virtual' (1996: 179), opening up the possibility of locality which is produced beyond the boundaries of a single physical location, facilitated by the use of digital communications technologies, which have developed and spread extensively in the fifteen years since his essay was originally published (although he did note the influence of media in the production of locality, and in particular electronic media).

In this way, one key arena in which locality is being reimagined and reconstructed, by scholars and practitioners alike, is the internet. This rethinking of locality in the context of the growing use of digital technologies has given rise to the idea of 'network locality' (Ito 1999; Gordon 2008), with scholars offering different slants on the term. In her work on this topic, Ito (1999: 2; emphasis in original) notes that little scholarly attention has been dedicated to the question of 'how place and locality is newly produced *through and within* media infrastructures'. She calls for an examination of the production of locality both in 'geographically rooted places that we generally associate with the local, but also within those very flows of electronic information that are thought to fragment our ties to the local' (Ito 1999: 2). In Ito's (1999: 6) approach, network locality thus refers to 'locality as it is constructed through technological infrastructures that span geography'. Writing almost ten years after Ito, Gordon (2008: n.p.) similarly suggests that 'the composite structure of local situations is changing in accordance with emerging practices of digital media', whilst also recognising the ongoing importance of place-based local knowledge. He links developments in digital media technologies and associated practices to broader sociocultural changes, arguing that these technologies constitute 'a medium to address [...] what it means [...] to be local in a world where everything from the spectacular to the mundane has global reach'.[25]

Whilst Ito focuses more on how digital technologies are used to produce localities which link people in different places,[26] Gordon's interest lies primarily in how the experience of place-

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[25] This assertion raises issues of voice and visibility, which are explored in more detail in chapters 2 and 3.
[26] Ito considers the example of SeniorNet, a network of senior citizen computer users located throughout the US who kept in touch via chat and discussion facilities on their websites and designated areas on the AOL system.

based locality is shifting in response to the use of these technologies.[27] Although not employing the same specific terminology, the areas of convergence between these approaches are well expressed by urban theorist Michael Peter Smith when he calls for

> a more dynamic conception of locality, one more likely to capture the connections linking people and places to the complex and spatially dispersed transnational communication circuits now intimately affecting the ways in which everyday urban life is experienced and lived. (2002: 110)

The internet can certainly be considered a prime example or component of Smith's 'transnational communication circuits' (although I prefer the term 'translocal', as I outline on pages 27-29). However, there is also increasing recognition by scholars of the central importance of the internet's local dimensions, or its growing localisation (Button & Partridge 2007; Postill 2008; Walker & Wehner 2009; Dutton 2010). Indeed, Gordon (2008: n.p.) emphasises that without the local documentation and information contributed by millions of users, the internet would not have its global reach. As it is, he notes, the internet is characterised by 'an unprecedented interlinking of local spaces' (Gordon 2008: n.p.), and I would add again that, following the discussion above, these may be local spaces oriented either around place or around other forms of affiliation.

The different ways in which locality is produced on and through the internet is therefore a compelling question of contemporary significance, and the concept of network locality serves to highlight the theoretical and methodological point made in the chapter introduction, with reference to the work of Hammersley and Atkinson, that the use of digital communications technologies can affect how the 'local' is experienced.[28] I have incorporated elements of both Ito's and Gordon's approaches to network locality in my research. I focus on how place-based locality is produced and expressed through the mainly internet-based publication and dissemination of content representing geographical place (understood as networked place), but my analysis also incorporates the networked dimensions of the locality produced and expressed through local content.

While the idea that network locality goes beyond place is an important one, advocates of the term are also at pains to stress that this kind of locality is not completely detached from physical, geographical place, and that geographical place is not being eliminated in new

[27] For example, Gordon observes that local knowledge about a particular neighbourhood can now be acquired without ever setting foot there, via the internet or mobile phone.
[28] For more on the methodological aspects see chapter 2.

understandings of locality.[29] Even as Ito considers the importance of affiliations not based in geography, in her vision of network locality, she emphasises that these remain 'grounded in particular social practices, materialized social texts, placed infrastructures and architectures', concluding that '[a]ll localities are ultimately hybrids of geographically and technologically placed connection' (1999: 21). Similarly, Gordon's approach seeks to capture the 'weaving of a distributed network with physical place' (Gordon & Koo 2008: 209).[30]

In this way, the emergence of network locality can be seen as a reflection of how the debate within internet studies about the relationship between the so-called 'online' (on the internet) and 'offline' (off the internet) realms of experience has moved on, from an initial perception of the 'virtual' as being detached from physical embodiment and place,[31] to a more nuanced approach. This recognises that online and offline dimensions, contexts or spaces are not in fact inherently separate or distinct, but that they should rather be seen as potentially intersecting and configuring each other in a multitude of complex ways, ways which can themselves be a fruitful object of study (Miller & Slater 2000, 2004; Hine 2000; Slater 2002; Leander & McKim 2003; Crang, Crosbie & Graham 2007). The emergence of network locality also goes hand in hand with a recognition that digital technologies provide renewed ways of engaging with the idea of place and interacting with physical places, as already discussed.[32]

For the present purposes, therefore, the key point is that locality is still produced in settings which are geographically located, and that place (albeit networked) is still centrally important for locality, but that this is a process which also takes place in settings which connect geographical locations and other forms of affiliation. The work of the scholars cited above also reveals how the internet (alongside other media and technologies) has become an important part of this process. My empirical data shows that even locality tied to place is now often more fluid, networked and porous than traditional approaches to locality allowed for, reinforcing the validity and relevance of the contemporary theories of place discussed earlier in this chapter. Once again, these theoretical points also have methodological implications. As Christine Hine has suggested, '[b]y focusing on sites, locales and places, we may be

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[29] This is perhaps where the concept differs from Appadurai's 'virtual neighbourhoods', although he expressed uncertainty about the possible effects of 'new sorts of disjuncture between spatial and virtual neighbourhoods' (Appadurai 1996: 194).

[30] In more recent work, Gordon, together with Adriana de Souza e Silva, has focused more specifically on 'net locality' in relation to locative media. Their jointly authored book, *Net Locality: Why Location Matters in a Networked World*, was published by Wiley Blackwell in April 2011.

[31] For a critique of virtuality see Miller and Slater (2000: 4-7).

[32] The section on embeddedness later in this chapter also provides a brief review of other relevant work on this topic.

missing out on other ways of understanding culture, based on connection, difference, heterogeneity and incoherence' (2000: 61).[33]

As already noted, Appadurai's theoretical work on locality sought to detach it from place, proposing that locality be thought of 'as primarily relational and contextual rather than as scalar or spatial' (1996: 178).[34] Appadurai explained in an interview that his aim in putting forward this understanding was to show that '[t]he local is as much as process and a project as anything else' (2002: 33), and elsewhere he also stressed that locality is the result of 'the practices of local subjects in specific neighbourhoods' (1996: 198), whether spatial or virtual. Appadurai therefore places people and their practices at the heart of his understanding of how locality is produced, and draws attention to the key role of the imagination, itself a social practice, in this process (2002: 34). In addition, his emphasis on the role of individuals in imagining and producing locality emphasises that this is not necessarily a collective, homogenous process but rather one that reflects the subjectivity and agency of different actors with different agendas and social positions. This diversity and plurality of possible perspectives and meanings associated with a particular (spatial) neighbourhood has also been noted by Massey; echoing Appadurai's (1996: 189) mention of possible struggles involved in the production of locality, she draws attention to the potential for these multiple identities to be 'a source of richness or a source of conflict, or both' (Massey 1994: 153).

For Appadurai, therefore, the production of locality 'is as much a work of the imagination as a work of material social construction' (2002: 34). In this way, while he recognises the ongoing relevance of the spatial, scalar, material and embodied dimensions of locality, he seeks

> to infuse them with the idea that in the world in which we live the imagination actually can reach into multiple scales and spaces and forms and possibilities. These can then become part of the toolkit through which the structure of feeling can be produced locally. (Appadurai 2002: 34)

This understanding of locality signals two key features of relevance in this study. Firstly, it reveals how different localities, whether they are spatial or virtual, are connected and overlap. Secondly, it points to the plural and diverse localities which individuals produce and

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[33] In chapter 2, I discuss how I used both place and connection as important principles for constructing my own field site.

[34] The term scalar refers to different geographical or spatial scales, such as local, regional, national, and global, although geographers variously approach scale as size, level or relation (Howitt 2002, 2003 cited in Mamadouh 2004: 484). As Mamadouh (2004: 484) explains, 'If scale is size, the global is the largest scale; if scale is level, the global is the highest level of government (federal or supranational); but if scale is relation, the local and the global are intertwined in a network of scales'.

interact with in the course of their everyday practices. Both of these aspects are of interest here as they are then revealed and expressed in content published and disseminated on the internet, and in the practices which this entails.

In thinking through these overlapping and plural localities, and how they are expressed in local content, Appadurai's concept of 'translocality' is also instructive. In his essay on the production of locality, Appadurai uses the term 'translocalities' in a discussion of different kinds of mobility, considering the neighbourhoods that result from the 'weav[ing] together [of] various circulating populations with kinds of locals' (1996: 192), such as in a tourist destination. Translocality has been usefully glossed by Gielis (2009: 275) as how 'people can experience many places (and accompanying social networks) within one place'. Another working definition of the term translocal is presented by Sun (2010). In her work on poetry by migrant workers in China, translocal 'means being identified with more than one location' (Oakes & Schein 2006: xiii cited in Sun 2010: 299) and can refer both 'to a somewhat involuntary process by which mobile individuals are identified with more than one location', and to 'a more active process by which one pursues [...] one's need and desire for identifying with more than one place' (Sun 2010: 299). It is the latter variant of translocal identification which is most relevant here. Although these interpretations of translocality focus on people and their relation to places rather than the places themselves, the concept of translocality is also closely related to the open and relational understandings of place discussed in the first section of this chapter, and particularly the emphasis in Massey's (1994) 'global sense of place' on the translocal linkages, meetings and mixtures encapsulated within individual places.[35]

In contemporary empirical studies, the term translocal often refers implicitly or explicitly to transnational flows and connections, particularly when used in relation to migration and mobility (see for example Hepp 2009; Brickell & Datta 2011), although Sun's work, mentioned above, employs translocality in a study of the cultural expressions of internal migrants in China. However, in recent research on the internet in a non-metropolitan location, in this case Tanzania, Paula Uimonen (2009) makes a clear distinction between the terms transnational and translocal, using the latter to refer to connections which extend beyond a

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[35] It is worth noting that although there are overlaps between Appadurai's notion of translocality and Massey's notion of a global sense of place, Massey does not actually use the term 'translocality'.

particular town, but not necessarily beyond national borders.[36] She thus emphasises 'the extent to which the Internet mediates translocal interaction' (Uimonen 2009: 277), between people in or from different areas of the same country, but also points to the more symbolic translocality of the Tanzanian arts centre she studied, as part of an imagined community associated with the arts, which also has transnational dimensions. I share Uimonen's preference for distinguishing between the translocal and the transnational, although I use translocal in a more 'micro' sense to refer not only to connections within national borders, but also to those between different areas of the same city and the ways these are actively asserted by content creators. To adapt the words of Smith (2002: 110), I therefore see the internet as a 'translocal communication circuit' (rather than a transnational one), a phrase which still makes room for the transnational communication taking place on the internet, but recognises that not all of it has this scope.

Building on the varying debates about locality and place explored above, I employ the terms translocal and translocality in this study to show how internet content published about a particular place by residents reveals and foregrounds, both within the actual content and in the path it undertakes once published, precisely these interlinkages and connections which exist between that place and other places, as well as the embeddedness or involvement of its creators in multiple settings and localities. I understand the internet as a medium which can facilitate and enable, as well as express, translocality at the same time as it is used to explore and produce both localities which assert the ongoing importance of geographical place and those which are primarily organised around non-geographic affiliations. At the same time, the practices involved in the production and dissemination of local content are also indicative and productive of translocality, and indeed of network locality, since they may involve and link people from different places in what I call 'content events'.[37]

The production of locality through internet content and the ways that content signals its translocality also have a political dimension in the particular context in which I carried out my research. I explore this in more detail in chapter 3, where I discuss the contemporary Brazilian context, but it is pertinent to introduce here the need for an awareness of the

[36] If the transnational is that which goes beyond the national, or across national borders, then the translocal can be understood as that which goes beyond the local or connects the local to other (local) contexts. The transnational is always translocal, but the translocal is not necessarily transnational. Hess implies a similar relationship between the two terms in his phrases 'transnational (and thereby translocal)' (2004: 176) and 'translocal (including transnational)' (2004: 181).

[37] Content events are empirical episodes produced by practices, centred around the publication of local content. For more on this methodological concept, which is adapted from 'literacy events' in new literacy studies, see chapter 2.

complexity and overlap of different forms of local and translocal identification and territorialisation associated with favelas and their residents, as noted by Oosterbaan (2009: 93-94) with reference to the work of Brazilian scholars. I therefore use the term translocal to highlight this complexity and multiplicity, as well as the connections produced and asserted in content between places in the same city (Rio de Janeiro),[38] as part of an attempt by the creators of the content to combat exclusionary and marginalising perspectives on favelas. In this way, the examples of local content and associated practices I provide shed light on the fragility of locality, and the struggles involved in its production, issues also raised by Appadurai, as I mentioned on page 26. Spatial locality also interacts in the work of these content creators with localities which, whilst still linked to place, have an additional networked dimension. For example, all three of the empirical case studies presented in this thesis include internet content which explicitly makes connections between different favelas as well as other periphery neighbourhoods. Indeed, reflecting this, I suggest that in the work of local content creators, favelas can be understood not simply as spatial neighbourhoods, or specific and particular local geographical places, but are also constitutive of a networked form of locality, which emphasises the common issues and perspectives which can be shared between those who live in them, despite their diversity.[39] This 'virtual neighbourhood' of the favelas, to use Appadurai's terminology, is linked also to the Brazilian idea of the *periferia* (periphery), which is both spatial reference and a form of identification which goes beyond space (Barbosa Pereira 2010; Batista dos Reis 2010). Whilst this is a term particularly associated with São Paulo, it is also used more broadly as an important and affirmative category of sociocultural identity and production associated with marginalised urban – and sometimes also rural – communities, including favelas.[40]

Leaving aside the Brazilian context for the moment, and returning to the theoretical discussion, the multiplicity of influences and affiliations at play in the production of locality, as well as its emotional and imaginative dimensions are central to the argument at the heart of this study. As I explained in the thesis introduction, it is my contention that local content can be understood as the result or expression of practices which reflect a plural and diverse ecology of locality constructed around (and by) each content creator, incorporating multiple

[38] Whilst there were some references to localities spanning beyond Rio or beyond Brazil in the content I considered, these were more limited. Although not the main focus of the discussion, they were still significant, and are mentioned in the empirical chapters.
[39] Nonetheless, as I emphasise in chapter 3, there can be a tendency to homogenise favelas, and therefore it is important to remember the differences between favelas, even if some shared issues and perspectives exist.
[40] The *periferia* is considered in more detail in chapter 3 and is also a particular theme of the empirical material presented in chapter 5.

locations and interests. This finding reflects Appadurai's (2002: 43) assertion that '[t]he work of the imagination allows people to inhabit either multiple localities or a kind of single and complex sense of locality, in which many different empirical scales coexist'. These scales not only coexist, but they can also shift and reconfigure themselves in response to events, taking on different boundaries and compositions. This responsiveness is also encapsulated in the concept of the placeworld, understood by Gordon and Koo as places whose 'inhabitants [have] imbue[d] them with meaning through *communicative action*' (2008: 206; emphasis in original). To adapt Gordon's (2008) observations about placeworlds to the context of my own research, my case studies show how the 'local' in local content sometimes relates to events or people in immediate geographical proximity, and at other times stretches much further and involves geographically dispersed locations and people. Despite the perceptible dispersion of locality, place thus remains an important referent for the production of locality in many situations, including those which involve the use of the internet, even as it is increasingly a networked form of place. Local content is also able to foreground the connections and flows between different scales or contexts of locality (whether place-based or otherwise) and different places.

I now turn to a discussion of the theoretical issues raised by the concept at the heart of my research, local content. Whilst the concept has already been introduced briefly in the introduction to this thesis, I now consider it in more depth, in light of the discussion in this chapter of locality, place and space, and more generally in terms of a research focus on internet-based local content. As I demonstrate, network locality, or the possibility of fluid, multiple localities not exclusively tied to place, was implicit in the original formulation of the term local content. At the same time, I suggest that recent developments in the internet have both widened the possibilities for the production of local content, including that which represents place, and broadened how the term can be understood and applied.

Local content: Origins and applications of the term

In the definition I adopt, which comes from policy research published by a non-governmental organisation rather than from academic work, local content is 'the expression of the locally owned and adapted knowledge of a community – where the community is defined by its

location, culture, language, or area of interest' (Ballantyne 2002: 2).[41] In this way, local content can be seen as the expression of the production of different kinds of localities, whether place-based or otherwise. Given that local content has mostly been associated with policy and projects so far,[42] my research has applied the concept in an investigation of the content generated in everyday uses of the internet, although still with a recognition that everyday practices of internet use may intersect in multiple ways with social and cultural projects which include the internet in their activities. My research has focused on non-elite everyday (rather than project-based) use of the internet in a Brazilian favela, in a setting largely unconnected to broader international policy debates and negotiations or even their ramifications at the national level, where the terminology 'local content' is not usually employed.[43] However, as I suggested earlier, the emergence of web 2.0 tools and user-generated content have meant that the concept of local content (if not the actual term) has gained a broader currency, outside of specific projects and policy discussions, and is therefore also applicable in this setting.

Although developed specifically in relation to the internet and new ICTs, the definition put forward by Ballantyne does not actually mention the internet. In fact, Ballantyne stresses that the concept of local content is equally (if not more) applicable to 'older' media used for the production, dissemination and consumption of local content, such as audio, video and print (or even person-to-person or oral communication), and that there is affinity with areas of work such as community media and indigenous knowledge. Ballantyne therefore distinguishes

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[41] Peter Ballantyne's report on local content, published by the International Institute for Communication and Development (IICD), an NGO based in the Netherlands, was commissioned by the United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID). It was linked to the work of the DOTForce (Digital Opportunity Task Force), a body set up in 2000 by G8 leaders which brought together multi-sector teams from 'developed and developing countries' in 'a cooperative effort to identify ways in which the digital revolution can benefit all the world's people, especially the poorest and most marginalized groups' (G8 Information Centre 2001). The specific purpose of Ballantyne's report was to explore possibilities for the implementation of action point 8 of the DOTForce Plan of Action (headed 'National and International Effort to Support Local Content and Applications Creation'). It pulled together the findings of a consultation exercise examining how local content was created, adapted and exchanged in developing countries, including case studies, input from partner organisations and a workshop held in Tanzania in March 2002. Following the end of the DOTForce's activities, local content creation continued to be part of international policy discussions about the internet and ICTs. The topic was discussed and included in documents resulting from the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS), an international multistakeholder process which took place from 2003 to 2005 (see World Summit on the Information Society 2003a, 2003b). These documents help to situate the origins of the term local content and its particular political significance in relation to the field known as ICT for Development (ICT4D).

[42] Empirical studies of local content creation, or participatory content creation with a local focus, have notably been carried out by Australia-based researchers, as a result of participation in several projects in Australia and South Asia (see for example Tacchi 2005, 2006, 2007; Tacchi, Watkins & Keerthirathne 2009; Bruns & Humphreys 2007, 2010; Humphreys & Bruns 2008).

[43] Chapter 3 briefly mentions relevant government policies in Brazil, and relevant projects from the public and NGO sector supporting local content production in favelas, whether or not they use this term to refer to what they do. However, these have not been the direct focus of my research.

between local content and 'local eContent' (the latter being the variant found on the internet), and emphasises that the internet may still be a relatively unimportant channel for the creation and communication of local content for local consumption in developing countries.[44] However, in this study, I use the term local content without the 'e' to reflect the broadened application of the term as internet use has increased, as well as the continuities between the internet and other forms of publication and dissemination, given that some of the content I consider in my case studies also circulated via other types of media.

There are of course other ways of understanding local content, and indeed, some are mentioned by Ballantyne in his report: content produced in a specific geographic location; content intended for or relevant to a specific local audience; media programming that is not imported from abroad.[45] The key feature of the definition proposed by Ballantyne is that it understands local content as being that which comes *from* local groups or individuals rather than being produced *for* them (2002: 5), conveys 'locally relevant messages and information', and provides 'opportunities for local people to interact and communicate with each other, expressing their own ideas, knowledge and culture' (2002: 1). Although this interpretation is specific and distinct, it still clearly makes room for a wide range of content in different formats and can be applied in different settings. As well as the specific policy context in which this definition of local content arose, it is a term which can also be related more broadly to discussions about 'digital inclusion'[46] – a term used here to refer to processes by which individuals and groups, particularly those considered marginalised, gain access to and are able to make use of the internet and related new media technologies 'to engage in *meaningful social practices*' (Warschauer 2004: 38; emphasis in original). Digital inclusion is now usually understood, at least in theory, to include the production of and access to local content (Warschauer 2004).

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[44] Ballantyne's (2002: 7) report also states that calls for more 'local content' on the internet by international policymakers may have been driven by a concern to give more global visibility to 'southern voices', e-commerce opportunities for local arts, crafts and music, local research results, and so on. The focus on developing countries in Ballantyne's report sits slightly uncomfortably here with a focus on Brazil. Although still characterised by high levels of inequality, which are reflected in the statistics for internet use in the country, the chapter on Brazil shows the sophistication and innovative nature of the country's digital culture. Brazil often appears at or near the top of international rankings of social network site usage or time spent online, and is one of a group of emerging markets predicted to see large numbers of new internet users by 2015, alongside Russia, India, China and Indonesia (The Boston Consulting Group 2010).

[45] Warschauer (2004) recognises that at least some locally relevant content can be provided by non-local groups, and a report by the Commonwealth Telecommunications Organisation (2008) defined local content as a service to be provided by governments.

[46] Digital inclusion is a contested term, but is used because of the widespread use in Brazil, both critically and uncritically, of the equivalent phrase in Portuguese, *inclusão digital*.

The scenario for local content creation and dissemination by ordinary people has evolved in recent years as a result of overall trends in the development and use of the internet. The potential or theoretical increases in the opportunities for ordinary internet users to be able to publish their own content via web 2.0-type platforms do arguably strengthen Ballantyne's proposition for local content, even if the concept can now be understood in a slightly different way in the light of these developments. In particular, the emergence of platforms which make it possible for individuals to publish their own content on the internet more quickly and easily, as well as the continuing growth in internet access, lead me to argue, based on my research, that local content can be understood as content local to an individual, an expression of his or her embeddedness in more than one setting or context, as well as his or her mobility between these. While Ballantyne's original definition of local content referred to 'the expression of the [...] knowledge of a *community*' (2002: 2; emphasis added), my reading of the term in the context of my research into largely individual, rather than collective, local content creation outside of the scope of projects, and enabled by digital media tools, has led me to an interpretation of local content as not only local to a specific 'location, culture, language, or area of interest', as proposed by Ballantyne (2002: 2), but also as the result of practices which reflect a more plural and diverse ecology of locality constructed around (and by) different content creators.

Beyond an explanation of how local content is understood in the context of this research project, both theoretically and in response to its empirical findings, and how developments in the internet since the publication of Ballantyne's report in 2002 have broadened the meaning and application of the concept, it is important to set out what kind of local content I have considered in my study. Broadly speaking, this has included texts, photographs and videos published on freely available commercial platforms, in this case mainly blogs.[47] However, I have not focused directly or only on blogs. Rather, as I outline in chapter 2, I have taken a communicative ecology approach (Slater, Tacchi & Lewis 2002), which considers the full range of platforms, tools and methods employed in the production, publication and dissemination of local content. In this way, as well as content published on blogs, my analysis also includes attention to how content is directly or indirectly linked, disseminated and discussed using social network sites, microblogs, print publications, and face-to-face events. In other words, I have not limited my focus to particular websites publishing content

[47] Blogs are covered in more detail in chapter 3, focusing on aspects and examples which are relevant to the Brazilian context, and specific features of blogs are also discussed as relevant in the case studies presented in chapters 4, 5 and 6.

explicitly labelled as 'local', but neither have I focused on the full ecology of individuals' communicative practices. In addition, I have looked both at 'content' and at 'form'. Although Graham (2010: 424) explains that content is separated from its form in web 2.0, a key component of my analysis has been to consider how content creators have also customised and adapted the actual platforms on which they publish content – such as through the incorporation of personalised images and text in headers, sidebars, footers, and so on. I call this 'framing content' and argue that this is, visually and textually, an important site for the production of locality in internet content, as much if not more so than actual 'posts' in some cases.[48]

More broadly, I understand local content as an arena in which technology facilitates the expression and presentation of messages which must be understood in a broader social, cultural and political context. Whilst it might be that sometimes the emergence of a particular type of technological functionality stimulates and encourages certain types of content creation and sharing as it is then appropriated by users, I place the emphasis on the practices and intentions of the individuals involved and on the broader context in which they live and work, and how they then respond to technology as a result of this. As Heather Horst and Daniel Miller have noted,

> When people adopt new media, we tend to assume that they first seize on all the new possibilities that the media offer in order to achieve previously unprecedented tasks. But this may be a mistaken expectation. When Miller and Slater (2000) studied the impact of the Internet in Trinidad, what became clear was that Trinidadians did not focus on the unprecedented new possibilities. Rather, the technology is used initially with reference to desires that are historically well established, but remain unfulfilled because of the limitations of previous technologies. These pent-up frustrations thus determine the day the new technology is first seen, what Miller and Slater termed 'expansive realisation'. (2006: 6-7)

In this way, I see the use of technologies such as the internet as embedded in particular social, cultural and political contexts. Whilst I am particularly interested in the geographical or territorial embedding of local content, as I outline in the following and final section of this chapter, this does not only mean the representation or referencing of place itself via the internet. Rather, embeddedness should also be seen as a reflection of 'the way in which a communicative technology is encountered from, and rooted in, a particular place' (Miller & Slater 2000: 4). As well as a particular favela, I argue that 'a particular place' in the case studies presented here also means the particular place of favelas in the popular imagination and the particular territoriality of the city of Rio de Janeiro, a subject I discuss in more detail

[48] See particularly the case study presented in chapter 5. It should also be noted that given the way that web 2.0 works, such 'framing content' can still be considered content in that it is inputted by users into a database, rather than being constructed through HTML code as would have been the case previously.

in chapter 3. Nonetheless, the local content in this study has not been approached simply as a representation of place. Rather, there has been an attempt to use it, and the practices involved in its creation, publication, and dissemination, as a way of encountering and problematising the very idea of the 'local' in the context of the internet, and beyond. In this context, the concept of embeddedness has proved useful and relevant in thinking about how content creators engage with, and demonstrate their engagement with, place-based locality and other forms of locality in their work, and the following section therefore considers it in more depth.

Embeddedness

Embeddedness is an idea which has been developed particularly in the field of economic geography. It originates in the work of Karl Polanyi, and later Mark Granovetter, who discussed the embeddedness of economic action in wider institutional and social frameworks (Hess 2004). As Hess explains, geographers have gone on to theorise and employ the concept 'from a distinct *spatial* point of view' (2004: 166; emphasis in original) to explain the evolution and economic success of regions where locally clustered networks of firms are present. However, in practice, Hess (2004: 166) notes that there is a 'plethora of meanings linked with embeddedness', and there is a need for an ongoing debate to address its conceptual complexity as it is applied in different contexts.

One way to approach embeddedness is by considering how the opposite term, disembeddedness, has been understood. Anthony Giddens (1991: 21) defined disembedding as 'the "lifting out" of social relations from local contexts of interactions and their restructuring across indefinite spans of time-space'. However, Hess, who critiques the 'overterritorialization' of embeddedness in economic geography, also argues that the relationship between globalisation and disembedding/embedding is more complex than original claims implied, and that globalisation should be understood as:

> a process of transnational (and thereby translocal) network building or embedding, creating and maintaining personal relationships of trust at various, interrelated geographical scales. (2004: 176)

Hess's approach recalls Appadurai's vision of locality in its mention of multiple and overlapping geographical scales, as well as its explicit focus on the multiplicity of forms of embeddedness. Hess identifies three major manifestations of the concept, namely societal embeddedness, network embeddedness and territorial embeddedness, where the latter

refers to 'the extent to which an actor is anchored in particular territories or places' (2004: 177). Fernando Bosco (2006: 347) also notes the prevailing emphasis on 'the rootedness of social phenomena in localities and specific settings' in geographical approaches to embeddedness.[49] However, his own research with the Madres de Plaza de Mayo in Argentina, a movement which began in a very specific place in the city of Buenos Aires but evolved to embrace a diversity of sites across the country, led Bosco to propose an alternative understanding of embeddedness, based on a relational understanding of place, thereby dispersing this rootedness. He explains the rationale for this as follows:

> Embeddedness for the Madres has always been a *geographically flexible* process because the territorial scope of their network has varied over time, often materializing or becoming more visible in particular places where emotions could be expressed and emotional bonds enforced, but always depending on the existence of embedded affective ties that operate across space. (Bosco 2006: 359; emphasis in original)

Bosco therefore views embeddedness as rootedness in multiple places, as well as rootedness with an emotional and affective dimension. His emphasis on how the focus of embeddedness can shift also brings to mind Gordon's discussion of how the scope of placeworlds is reconfigured in response to events, which I referred to earlier in this chapter.

Despite these important critiques of the overterritorialisation of embeddedness, the ongoing importance of territorial embeddedness has been identified by many scholars researching internet content production. For example, Ramesh Srinivasan and Adam Fish (2009: 572) conducted a study of internet authorship in Kyrgyzstan and found that 'place and local community are not eclipsed by the global', but rather that 'Internet authorship reaffirms commitments to place and nation', contrasting this with the literature on transnational community solidarity and new media. Likewise, the London bloggers studied by Adam Reed (2008: 393) did not set out to write about the city, but found this 'was an unexpected outcome of their on-line activity'; Reed sees this as 'a reversal of a commonplace assumption: the idea that the Internet dis-embeds people from engagement with particular places'. The introduction to a recent journal issue on the topic of 'Internet and Community' stated that 'emergent and evolving uses of ICTs reinforce and regenerate geographically based community identities and [...] the internet is used to reconnect and reinforce connections to specific locations' (Haythornthwaite & Kendall 2010: 1083). Likewise, Tingyu Kang (2009) argues for the ongoing centrality of geographical place (in this case, the homeland) in the cultural practices of Chinese migrants living in London, as manifested via their use of the

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[49] Bosco draws particularly on the work of Ansell in his discussion of territorial embeddedness (Ansell 2003 cited in Bosco 2006).

internet. Based on work in Tanzania, Uimonen (2009: 276) proposes that 'the social embeddedness of the Internet represents an intensification of translocal and transnational relations and imageries, while underscoring a sense of locality and national identity'. These are just some of the recent works which refute earlier claims of the disembeddedness associated with the internet, and which engage with the recent debates on embeddedness discussed above.

The critiques of the overterritorialisation of embeddedness mentioned above, and the emergence of more flexible understandings of embeddedness and place, therefore do not mean that territorial embeddedness is no longer relevant. The theoretical debates referenced above prove helpful in distinguishing between different kinds of embeddedness, and in avoiding essentialist understandings of territoriality and embeddedness, as this chapter has also sought to do in previous sections looking at place and locality. Indeed, it is precisely territorial embeddedness which is of particular interest in this study of local content on the internet, although the term is used here to refer to content, rather than to individuals or organisations (or networks) as is common in the literature on embeddedness. Nonetheless, there are of course individuals behind the content, responsible for its creation and publication, who are themselves embedded socially, in networks and in territories – and who are involved in the production of different types of localities, which may be reflected in their content. Where their content is territorially embedded, it can be understood as an expression of their own territorial embeddedness.

Content creators can therefore be seen as practitioners who both embed and disembed locality (or who embed different modes of locality) in their content.[50] In relation to territorial embeddedness, this may include practices to anchor content in place through explicit textual and visual referencing of specific places in the body of content or in framing content, the use of localised language, the dissemination of content using particular channels or sites and the targeting of particular audiences, as I show in my three case studies. In practice, to return to Giddens, place is far from being phantasmagoric in such territorially embedded internet content. Indeed, this assertion fits with ethnographic studies of the internet reviewed by Kevin Leander and Kelly McKim (2003: 220), which showed that both generic and specific '[o]ffline places are embedded within and reproduced in cyberspace'. Or, as another study

[50] Although the object of study is different, there are echoes of such an approach in Pitman's (2007: 231) argument about hypertext, namely the recognition that it 'can offer a space where literature, Latin American or other, can be just as embedded or disembedded as it has been since at least the early twentieth century and where it can make a deliberate effort to convey its position on this matter to its audience'.

found, 'ICTs are always and everywhere *actively* embedded within the social networks through which place is constituted and histories made relevant' (Agar et al. 2002: 283; emphasis in original). In my research, the expression of territorial embeddedness through local content is also associated with the Brazilian trend towards the affirmation of the territory of the favela by some residents and cultural producers (Ramos 2007; Carvalho Lopes 2009), in response to discrimination and marginalisation. In this way, practices for the embedding of content are themselves embedded in a broader social, cultural and political context.

However, as I have already suggested, territorial embeddedness is not the only form of embeddedness of relevance to this study, and I show in this thesis how the work of an individual content creator can reveal the multiple dimensions of their embeddedness. The embedding practices mentioned above can also be adopted to anchor content in localities not so specifically tied to place. The content creators I consider are embedded in multiple places or placeworlds, as well as in different networks and social contexts (although, as noted above, some network localities that they produce through their content still have a 'placial' dimension, such as the *periferia*). Nonetheless, reflecting the way territory operates in Rio de Janeiro as a powerful site of both stigma and affirmation, place constitutes a central theme of the work of the content creators discussed in this thesis, and territorial embeddedness and affirmation is thus the most compelling and urgent form of embeddedness for their content, given the wider context in which they work, and their explicit or implicit motivations for producing content.

Conclusion: Rethinking local content

In this chapter, I have examined theoretical ideas relating to place, space, locality and embeddedness in the light of the internet and digital media technologies and have suggested that both place, and the internet, are characterised by a fundamentally translocal connectiveness. I argued not only that local content can be understood as a technique for the production of locality, but also that it may reflect what Appadurai has termed 'a bewildering palimpsest of highly local and highly translocal considerations' (1996: 198) in the practices and imagination of individual local content creators. In this way, local content about a particular local place, such as that produced by the favela residents whose work is analysed in this thesis, can also reveal how that place interacts with other places and affiliations which are part of the ecology of locality they produce and engage with in their daily practices. Local content affirming the ongoing importance of geographical place can thus coexist with local

content which reflects other forms of locality. Nonetheless, place and place-based locality remains an important reference on the internet broadly speaking, even as it can now be understood in more fluid ways, and some content creators, such as those whose work I discuss in this thesis, choose to explicitly display and affirm the specifically territorial embeddedness of their content.

Although scholars and commentators recognise that the internet is becoming increasingly local or locally oriented, it remains at its core a network imbued also with translocal potential. This can be seen in the way local content produced by participants in this study circulates and is available beyond the territories in which it is embedded, and is produced and distributed with an awareness of potential and actual local and translocal (or non-local) audiences. Indeed, non-local audiences may be of particular interest, given the particular issues surrounding the representation of favelas. In this sense, to recall the critiques of Castells mentioned earlier in this chapter, it is indeed both places *and* flows, and the relationships between them, which are of interest in this study. With this in mind, it was necessary to design and implement a research methodology that would be 'able to account for both movement and placed-ness' (Walker 2010: 38). As I explain in the next chapter, this was achieved by conceptualising my fieldwork as a process of following specific examples of local content, in a multi-sited and 'networked field site' (Burrell 2009) which incorporated spatial and mediated settings and allowed for close interaction with local content and with its creators.

Chapter 2: Following the content: Methodology and research ethics

Introduction

My fieldwork for this project lasted for a period of thirteen months, from January 2009 to February 2010. It took place in Rio de Janeiro and on the internet and involved mainly internet-based observations, interviews with local content creators, and textual and visual analysis of internet content. It also included more general monitoring of media coverage of issues relating to favelas and to internet use and content creation by their residents, and of the specific favela where my fieldwork took place. My experience during this project fits with the observation made by Hine (2005) that while social research on the internet often causes anxiety among researchers about what constitutes appropriate methods, it also offers potential for methodological innovation. The need for innovation and improvisation in this project arose not only because the study of the internet remains a relatively new area in itself, without established methodological canons, but also because there has been relatively little work on this topic so far in Latin American studies, the interdiscipline which forms the academic home for this thesis. Indeed, in the process of carrying out and writing up this research, I have come to the realisation that my work can be located at the intersection of these two interdisciplines, internet studies and Latin American studies. However, this apparently neat formulation masks the complexity and diversity of the references, influences and approaches which I have brought together in the theoretical and methodological shaping of this project, and it is these which I wish to explore in this chapter, as well as the more practical aspects of the research and how it was carried out.

The explicit improvisation and responsiveness to hybridity (hybridity here refers to both the research project itself and to the field site that was constructed) which can be observed in this project also reflect the ethnographic inspiration of my methodology, which I have conceptualised as a process of 'following the content'. Its development has been an ongoing process, at the heart of the project, and this is reflected in the space allocated to methodology here in the thesis itself. Throughout the research process, from planning to writing up, I sought to be reflexive about methodology and methods, and particularly about ethics. My research raised specific ethical issues, associated with its interdisciplinary nature, its interpretation of local content as both text and practice, and its focus on internet content produced by ordinary people from a Brazilian favela, and these affected decisions about the

need for informed consent, how to identify participants and how to deal with the question of whether or not to cite directly from content published on the internet. In particular, I had to negotiate the intersection of different methodological perspectives: those which view internet content creators as authors of published work, deserving credit and attribution, and those which view them as human subjects, entitled to anonymity and the protection of their privacy. In order to address this tension, I constructed my own version of what Bassett and O'Riordan have called 'a hybrid model of relational ethics that incorporates text, space and bodies' (2002: 245), and drew on methodological approaches to text from the social sciences, particularly from anthropology and new literacy studies.

My research sought to go beyond textual and visual analysis of internet content, and to incorporate the perspectives of content creators through direct interaction and interviews with them, as well as data about the practices involved in producing and disseminating internet content. Although my interaction with content creators in the course of the research meant that they should be understood as human subjects, the centrality of textual and visual data in the project raised issues about authorship and visibility, as well as the degree of privacy which would be possible to guarantee them in this case, given the traceability of internet content.[51] Nonetheless, ongoing and regular consultation with the content creators, which lay at the heart of the nuanced approach to informed consent which I deployed, helped to shape the decision to cite directly from content, reflecting the view of its creators that it is in the public domain, and intended to be read by a potentially wide audience. Indeed, as my empirical chapters show, the content creators with whom I worked are directly seeking a non-local audience for their representations of their neighbourhood. However, because they cannot be considered 'public figures' in the conventional sense, I took a cautious approach to their identification in this thesis.

This research came about precisely due to an interest in exploring the implications of the publication of internet content by ordinary people, which puts forward their own perspectives and representations of the neighbourhoods where they live. As scholars have noted, the internet can afford visibility to marginalised groups, ordinary people and local issues (Mitra 2004; boyd 2008; Gordon 2008), but the heightened visibility that may in turn be afforded by writing about such use of the internet in research is not neutral (Banks & Eble 2007; McKee & Porter 2009) and must be explored and reflected upon. I do not believe that it is the role of

[51] Traceability is 'the possibility of locating digital data on the Internet using search engines or any other mechanisms enabled by digital platforms (log files, user profiles, etc)' (Beaulieu & Estalella 2011: 10).

my research to highlight and draw attention to 'success stories' of the way the internet is being used by favela residents, in the way that projects and reports funded or run by NGOs, the state or private foundations might do, but on the other hand, the content produced as the result of such use is central to my research focus and therefore merits inclusion in research write-ups. Decision-making in this area is complex, and it is necessary to balance the risk of silencing the authorship and agency of content creators (Bassett & O'Riordan 2002; Franklin 2004) against the need to maintain the privacy of the content creators in question, given they are not public figures (Banks & Eble 2007), as I pointed out above. As Bruckman (2002: 227) has noted, the distinction between published and unpublished work is also no longer clear-cut on the internet, and this raises additional challenges.

This chapter combines a discussion of the influences and principles guiding my methodology and the key issues arising from its interdisciplinary focus, with a more practical overview of how the methodology was developed and implemented during the research process, and the specific methods used. I begin with a discussion of ethnography and the nature of ethnographic field sites, looking particularly at how ethnography has been used and adapted to study topics relating to the internet. I then explore the trend towards 'multi-sited ethnography' and introduce the trope of 'following', associated with this approach, showing how other researchers have operationalised this principle and reconceptualised the idea of travel and mobility in ethnographic studies of the internet and related topics. In the following section, I examine the different options for beginning and locating ethnographic research specifically concerned with locality on the internet. The focus of the chapter then shifts to an exploration of anthropological and ethnographic approaches to text and writing, although not in an internet context, culminating in a discussion of new literacy studies as a field of study that combines analysis of texts and practices. This leads into an introduction of the key methodological concepts used in my fieldwork, beginning with the 'content event', and also covering the 'communicative ecology' and the related idea of the 'blog-circuit'. The following section explores the ethical issues associated with the study of writing by ordinary people, with particular attention to questions of agency and visibility. I examine the different ways that researchers have approached the relationship between texts and their authors, before moving on to look at approaches to the identification of internet content creators in research write-ups.

The focus of the chapter then returns to the practical dimensions of the fieldwork, as I outline how I constructed my field site through a process of mapping the local content originating in a

particular favela, and how I explored different entry points such as the social network site Orkut and local internet cafés, before narrowing down my focus to the content published on blogs and their communicative circuits. I briefly discuss specific issues associated with carrying out research in a favela, and provide an overview of how I used specific internet platforms in the process of mapping and then following local content. I also outline how I initiated contact with content creators and how I interacted with the three individuals whose work is covered in chapters 4, 5 and 6 of this thesis. The penultimate section of the chapter outlines the nuanced, sensitive approach to informed consent deployed in this thesis, which included a data review process and ongoing consultation with content creators on how best to identify them in research write-ups. The chapter concludes by returning to the 'following the content' theme, with an overview of the contours of my networked field site and my mobility within it.

An ethnographically inspired approach

Although it cannot be called (an) ethnography as such, this research was ethnographically inspired. By this I mean that its design and implementation were strongly influenced by scholars using ethnographic approaches to study topics related to this research project, such as the internet (Hine 2000; Miller & Slater 2000; Burrell 2009), texts (Eichhorn 2001; Blommaert 2008) and literacy, or writing (Barton & Hamilton 1995; Barton & Papen 2010).[52] It also sought to follow certain guiding principles common to ethnographic or ethnographically inspired approaches, regardless of the object of study, namely the need for methodological adaptiveness and reflexivity, and 'a commitment to try and view the object of enquiry through attempting some kind of alignment with the perspective of those who participate in the research' (Horst & Miller 2006: 167). However, the research largely did not involve traditional long-term immersion and participant observation, considered by some scholars to be one of the fundamental tenets of ethnography (Miller & Slater 2000: 21-22; Hammersley & Atkinson 2007: 3; Estalella & Ardèvol 2007: 4). This was partly due to the nature of the field which was constructed, and the questions being asked, which would have made such an approach difficult, as I explain later in the chapter. I instead opted principally for 'systematic observation' (Androutsopoulos 2008) of internet content sites, combined with informal interaction with content creators (both face-to-face and via email and internet chat), semi-

[52] Note that there are some differences between these approaches to ethnography, as I outline in the section on texts and practices.

structured interviews (mainly face-to-face, but also carried out via internet chat), occasional participant observation at relevant events, and textual and visual analysis of internet content.

In this way, therefore, the approach taken in this project reflects the improvisation and responsiveness to the conditions and characteristics of the field which can be considered a defining feature of ethnography, over and above any specific method in itself (Hine 2000; Leander & McKim 2003). As linguistic anthropologist Jan Blommaert put it, '[w]hen it comes to methods, ethnography has always been characterised by eclecticism and bricolage: the ethnographer thinks and develops methods in response to the features of the object of inquiry' (2008: 13).[53] Based on this assertion, in fact, Blommaert argues that his own study of two grassroots texts from the Democratic Republic of the Congo can be considered ethnographic even though it did not involve fieldwork per se. Another scholar who researched texts (or what she calls the 'textual community' of zines) using an ethnographic approach, Kate Eichhorn (2001), similarly questions the inevitability of travel in the ethnographic research experience. Whilst her project did involve fieldwork, the bulk of this was conducted from her home. However, Eichhorn argues that her research nonetheless remained faithful to a key principle of ethnography in the way that it mirrored the practices of the people she was researching:

> I maintain that coming to understand how people live may still be contingent on establishing a relationship with the people we seek to study, and on participating in their everyday life on some level. However, I insist that understanding people's lives, particularly in the technologically driven Western world, may sometimes require ethnographers to do what the people they seek to study do, even if it necessitates staying at home. (2001: 566)

In my own research, I also found that my home – or my laptop computer – was an important location for my fieldwork. This 'experiential rather than physical displacement' (Hine 2000: 45) is a common feature of ethnographic research on the internet.[54] Home, for me, was the main place from which I followed and 'listened' (Crawford 2009) to content, as I explain later in this chapter, although I did also follow the flows of content into the favela and into the city, meeting content creators in person.

Like other non-anthropologists researching the internet using a variant of ethnography, then, I credit the ethnographic inspiration of my approach, but also present caveats about its

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[53] Blommaert (2008: 13) proposes four fundamental characteristics of ethnography, which do not include participant observation: '(i) an assumption about the situated (contextualised) nature of human actions; (ii) an interpretive stance and reflexive awareness of "bias" in all stages of research; (iii) a commitment to comprehensiveness and complexity [...] and (iv) an assumption that small things (analytic detail) can shed light on bigger things'.

[54] See also Amit (2000) for more on the place and function of home in ethnographic fieldwork.

limitations. Like them, I stop short of calling my work ethnographic in the traditional sense. For example, Hine, author of the influential book *Virtual Ethnography*, notes that 'ethnography of, in and through the Internet can be conceived of as an adaptive and wholeheartedly partial approach which draws on connection rather than location in defining its object' (2000: 10). Marianne Franklin (2004: 203), who carried out research into an internet discussion forum used by people living in or from the Pacific, emphasised that her study,[55] although 'not an (Internet) ethnography', still constituted 'part of nascent Internet ethnographic research projects'. Similarly, Jannis Androutsopoulos (2008) adapted ethnography to his study of German hip hop websites, developing what he calls 'discourse-centred online ethnography'. He notes that 'it adopts an ethnographic perspective and uses elements of ethnographic method in various settings' (Androutsopoulos 2008: n.p.), namely those elements which he considers appropriate for an interest in language usage on the internet. These are, of course, only selected examples of the many ways in which ethnography has been adapted in specific internet research projects by non-anthropologists.[56]

One of the key areas in which projects such as those mentioned above, and my own, differ from traditional ethnographies is in the nature of the field that is constructed. Traditionally associated with single, bounded, physical locations – in practice often remote villages in locations far from home –, the ethnographic field site has come to be viewed differently as the focus of anthropological research has shifted increasingly towards more familiar, urban and mediated settings, and as scholars from other disciplines have increasingly adopted the approach in their own work (Marcus 1995; Hine 2000; Amit 2000; Hammersley & Atkinson 2007: 137-139; Burrell 2009). As Hine (2000: 10) has observed, such developments 'open up a space for thinking about ethnography as an experientially based way of knowing that does not aspire to produce a holistic study of a bounded culture'. Nonetheless, despite the self-professed partial nature of these research undertakings, Jenna Burrell (2009: 185) has suggested that the methodological debates and innovations associated with using ethnography to study the internet, and particularly those that propose a redefinition of the nature of the ethnographic field site, have broader relevance for ethnography as a whole. As

[55] The study in question involved visiting and observing an internet discussion forum over a period of five years, contact and interviews with moderators, participants and other relevant people via email, the forum itself and face-to-face meetings in different geographical locations.

[56] For reviews of recent ethnographic studies in this area (by both anthropologists and non-anthropologists) see Postill (2010) and Coleman (2010). The former discusses four works which 'focus on a single Internet platform or field of practice' (Postill 2010: 647) and the latter examines 'the growing ethnographic corpus on new media', under three headings: the cultural politics of digital media, the vernacular cultures of digital media, and the prosaics of digital media (Coleman 2010: 488).

she writes, such research projects have 'demonstrated the possibility of awareness and analysis of spaces beyond what can be physically inhabited' (Burrell 2009: 185). It should be noted, however, that there is ongoing debate about what kinds of fieldwork and field sites can be counted as truly ethnographic, for example in the study of media (Murphy & Kraidy 2003; Murphy 2011).[57]

Constructing the field – Introducing the trope of 'following'

A particularly influential rethinking of ethnography, which has also informed my own approach, has been the 'multi-sited' or 'mobile' ethnography proposed by George Marcus.[58] As Marcus explains, in an oft-quoted passage, multi-sited ethnography

> is designed around chains, paths, threads, conjunctions, or juxtapositions of locations in which the ethnographer establishes some form of literal, physical presence, with an explicit, posited logic of association or connection among sites that in fact defines the argument of ethnography. (1995: 105)

In this understanding, the field becomes dispersed and is more self-consciously *constructed* by the ethnographer (Amit 2000). It also covers different possible approaches to defining one's object of study in a multi-sited approach, as listed by Marcus (1995: 106-110), namely: follow the people; follow the thing; follow the metaphor; follow the plot, story or allegory; follow the life or biography; follow the conflict. Marcus (1995: 110-112) also mentions an alternative, related approach in which the ethnographer undertakes a 'strategically situated (single-site) ethnography', without necessarily moving around (as much), but still incorporating an explicit awareness of, and attention to, the multi-sitedness of the field.

It was the latter approach that influenced Burrell (2009) in her study of the appropriation of the internet in Accra, Ghana, and she has written specifically about the logistics of

[57] In a recent book chapter on media ethnography, Patrick Murphy considers the question 'Where is the dividing line between doing ethnography in the classic sense and doing research that is ethnographic in some respects? How important is that line?' (Conan & Rothenbuhler 2005: 2 cited in Murphy 2011: 380-381). Murphy (2011: 387) makes the case for the ongoing central importance of 'the chore of methodological self-interrogation' and 'detailed renderings of the field experience' in media ethnographies. He believes that some of the best studies of this kind are based on fieldwork in 'geographically identifiable communities' (Murphy 2011: 388), and that the embodied experience of fieldwork gives such studies an 'interpretive vitality' usually lacking in 'studies that draw from a more dissolved, ephemeral, phantom-like sense of the field or that spring from quasi-ethnography that assumes rather than establishes ethnographic proximity' (Murphy 2011: 390).

[58] Marcus (1995: 104) notes that this approach is partly a reflection of reconfigurations of space and place, which were discussed in the previous chapter.

constructing such a field site and the accommodations which it involves.[59] Drawing on the work of Marcus and other anthropologists responsible for more fluid understandings of the ethnographic field, as well as work in virtual ethnography (such as that of Hine, and others), Burrell's fieldwork experience led her to put forward the concept of 'the field site as network' (Burrell 2009: 195). In this approach, the field site becomes defined by the 'physical movements, places indexed in speech and text, and social imaginings produced by research participants' (Burrell 2009: 196), which the researcher both follows and intercepts.[60] The field site is thus 'a network composed of fixed and moving points including spaces, people and objects' (Burrell 2009: 189), although not all of the spaces are physically accessible to the researcher (or indeed to research participants).

Burrell initially sought to locate her study within an internet café in Accra, but after experiencing difficulties in carrying out satisfactory observations there she began following users from the café to a variety of other spaces, both real and virtual: 'homes, churches, schools, foreign countries, into the future (if only imagined) and back to the Internet café where [she] was ultimately able, in a few cases, to observe more closely the immersive social encounters of these Internet users' (2009: 189). The trope of 'following', taken from Marcus, thus remains central in Burrell's research, although she emphasises that this is not always a physical act: 'Through an openness to following participants through space as well as in language, there is potential for empirical surprises and novel insights' (Burrell 2009: 196).

Based on her research into zines, Eichhorn proposes a similar approach, drawing on Marcus but also on James Clifford's idea of 'variously routed fieldwork' (Clifford 1997: 91 cited in Eichhorn 2001: 566), when she offers her research as an example of how to implement 'modes of travel that do not posit physical displacement as a prerequisite' (Eichhorn 2001: 566). The reworked metaphor of travel is also present in Leander and McKim's (2003: 237) reflections on 'the challenges of moving ethnography from a place-based practice to moving, traveling practices'. They bring together influences from literacy studies,[61] spatial theory and ethnography in sketching out how researchers could 'follow and interpret space-constituting

[59] This aspect of contemporary ethnography – the need to make logistical accommodations – is also noted by other scholars and is discussed in more detail below.
[60] Burrell's idea of interception in turn became a key methodological concept in Dana Walker's (2010) research into civic internet discussion forums in Philadelphia.
[61] Literacy studies has also influenced my own approach, as I explain in the section entitled 'Bringing together texts and practices'.

practices' (Leander & McKim 2003: 225). An important part of such an approach would be 'the mapping of flow, such as the flow of texts and bodies' (Leander & McKim 2003: 225).

In a similar vein, but in a different context, Sarah Strauss found herself 'following threads and trails of people, publications and practices that together told a story' (2000: 161) in her study of transnational yoga practices. Like Burrell, this experience led her to suggest a way of understanding the ethnographic field site that differs from traditional approaches, namely 'as an intersection between people, practices and shifting terrains, both physical and virtual' (Strauss 2000: 171-2). Such heterogeneous, multi-faceted understandings of the ethnographic field, no longer tied to a bounded physical location, defined by the shape and movements of the social phenomenon under investigation and its protagonists, and the relationship which the researcher establishes with it and with them,[62] have been useful to me in defining my own field. Like Hine (2007), I sought to be alert to connections and predisposed to mobility (whether methodological or analytical, physical or between sites on the internet). The trope of following, which has become 'following the content' in the context of this research project, was also very much present in my own approach, and I discuss this in more detail in later sections of the chapter.

Burrell, Strauss and the other researchers mentioned above share the aim (and often the necessity) of constructing a field site which responds not only to their research object and questions, but also to the practical and logistical considerations which arise in the process of conducting fieldwork – particularly fieldwork into social phenomena which cannot be rooted or located in a single, bounded, physical, location. Indeed, the 'accommodations' (Burrell 2009: 196) that researchers make in constructing and maintaining their field show that this is an ongoing and adaptive process, affected by the characteristics of the field and the possibilities and resources available at the time of fieldwork (Hine 2000, 2007), but also by other considerations traditionally positioned as being largely 'outside' of fieldwork, such as the researcher's personal circumstances (Amit 2000; Knowles 2000).

Whilst my own research remained oriented to place, siting my fieldwork in the favela in question, or in a particular location in that favela, represented only one available strategy among many. It would have been hard to find a single physical fieldwork location from which

[62] To cite Burrell (2009: 186) again, 'Researchers cycle in and out of the field, skip certain areas entirely, and may rely on the recollections of participants in interviews to map out the space. Fieldworkers' movements are no longer coextensive with the way the social phenomenon under study extends across space'.

to observe the practices involved in creating, publishing and disseminating local content of the kind that interested me, given I did not wish to focus the research on projects incorporating such activities. For me, like the researchers mentioned in this section, it therefore worked better to conceive my fieldwork as a process of following, in this case following the *travelling* texts and practices of the content creators in question. Incorporating the trope of 'following' into the methods used in a study of the publication and dissemination of internet content makes methodological sense not only due to the relevance of Marcus's multi-sited ethnography (and those who have adapted and developed it further in their work), but also because following itself has come to the fore as a mode of engagement in contemporary internet platforms and practices.[63] Viewing my fieldwork as a process of 'following the content' also enabled me to combine the need to keep track of changes to individual content sites themselves, alongside the publication of new content, and to trace the dissemination and publication of content across different internet platforms as well as in print.

This section has introduced multi-sited ethnography and the trope of following as a way of structuring fieldwork and engaging with the research object. I have shown how contemporary researchers have actioned research inspired by Marcus, which has affected their understanding of the ethnographic field, and I have provided an overview of how these influences have inspired my own 'following the content' methodology. In the following section, I consider the different options available for beginning or locating ethnographically inspired research looking specifically at 'local context[s]' of internet use (Hine 2000: 5).

Entry points to local internets

The emphasis on the fluid and ongoing nature of the construction of the ethnographic field in the works mentioned above does not remove the need for researchers to select entry points (Burrell 2009: 190) to their field sites. Scholars focusing on local contexts or aspects of internet use have adopted different positions on the most appropriate starting point for such research, although they largely agree, as I pointed out in chapter 1, that online and offline dimensions, contexts or spaces are not inherently separate or distinct, but rather intersect

[63] Following is particularly associated with the micro-blogging site Twitter, in which users opt to 'follow' and therefore automatically receive each other's postings, but is also commonly used in relation to slightly older technologies such as RSS (Really Simple Syndication), which allow users to be automatically informed of updates to the content of selected websites.

and configure each other in a multitude of complex ways, which should also be the objects of research.

Hine has recognised that when the object of study is the internet, 'finding a place to go is by no means straightforward' (2000: 9). She suggests that place may still constitute an important reference for fieldwork, but that the focus could shift to 'follow[ing] connections made meaningful from that setting', with attention to 'the ways in which particular places were made meaningful and visible' (Hine 2000: 60).[64] This enables the researcher to 'remain agnostic about the most suitable site for exploring the internet' (Hine 2000: 60). Her own work looks at the repercussions of the Louise Woodward case – a topic, not a location, although it should be noted that this is also considered a 'local context' of use (Hine 2000: 5), in a formulation that recalls the discussion of non-place based localities in chapter 1.

Hine is particularly interested in the relationship between offline events and internet content, having drawn on both amateur websites and newsgroups and mainstream (offline) media coverage in her research into the Louise Woodward case, and she identifies the need for further research into 'the transformations which Internet content goes through as it passes from online to offline contexts' (2000: 155). This is something which I have considered in my own work, as I found that the local content I investigated was not restricted to the internet. A flow from offline to online was not at all surprising in my study – indeed, it was expected given my interest in the representation of place in internet content. However, I also found, in two of the cases I looked at, that content published initially on the internet was then also disseminated in print formats, both directly by the content creators and by other actors.

A particular local context of interpretation and use of the internet is also the focus of another influential early book on the use of ethnography to study the internet, in this case by Daniel Miller and Don Slater, although they more explicitly situate the local in geographical place, reflecting their view of the embeddedness of the internet. As they write, 'the Internet is not a monolithic or placeless "cyberspace"; rather, it is numerous new technologies, used by diverse people, in diverse real-world locations' (Miller & Slater 2000: 1). Miller and Slater therefore take a stronger line on starting points for internet research, recommending that 'if you want to get to the Internet, don't start from there' (2000: 5). Nonetheless, their research, whilst firmly rooted in Trinidad, and in participant observation and interviews carried out

[64] In this formulation, Hine draws on Hastrup and Olwig's (1997: 8 cited in Hine 2000: 60) idea of the field as a 'field of relations'.

there, did also involve data collection from websites, interaction with participants by email, chat and ICQ,[65] as the research extended 'across time and location' (Miller & Slater 2000: 22). The need for multiple sites of research interaction in the study of internet localisation is also emphasised by John Postill. Based on his work on residential sociality in suburban Malaysia, he identifies complex methodological, conceptual and logistical challenges in this type of research, which requires that one 'spend sufficient time in a local setting to get to know, both online and offline, those who live, work, and/or play there' (Postill 2008: 414). Similar issues were faced by Dana Walker (2010: 23), who researched local discussion forums in the American city of Philadelphia, and confronted the question of 'how to construct the location of a project when the sites, technologically-mediated practices, and people we study exist and flow through a wider information ecology that is neither fixed nor can easily be located as "online" or "offline"'.

Fundamentally, it is the research questions and the nature of the object of study which should determine the particular mix of methods and the entry points used in a specific project. The explicit emphasis on content in my own research questions justified the choice of content as the entry point for the construction of the field, leading to the establishment of contact with the creators of that content. Given this, I could draw on a negotiation of entry points which removes the anxiety about location, as proposed by Anne Beaulieu (2010). She suggests that researchers could instead concern themselves with the establishment of 'co-presence'. Co-presence may or may not involve 'physical co-location'; this is one mode of fieldwork engagement among others, and different forms of interaction with research participants, including face-to-face contact *and* contact in mediated settings, are thus accorded 'a more symmetrical treatment' (Beaulieu 2010: 454) in this approach. Rather than asking where they should go to conduct their fieldwork, then, Beaulieu (2010: 457) suggests ethnographers should ask how they can establish co-presence with the participants in their research. As she points out, this is,

> a very active form of 'field-making'. The field is constituted *in* the interaction. The field is not a container or background in which interaction takes place, and a certain lack of stability of the 'field' could be considered a potential loss of adopting this approach. (Beaulieu 2010: 463; emphasis in original)

In my research, it would have been difficult, particularly at the beginning of the research process, to be physically co-present with content creators at the moment of content creation.

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[65] ICQ (as in 'I seek you') is an instant messaging programme which was particularly popular in the late 1990s and early 2000s.

In seeking to gain insights into the practices of internet content creators from a particular neighbourhood, I therefore established co-presence and interacted with research participants on email, via internet chat, and in face-to-face interactions which took place both in that neighbourhood and in other areas of the city. However, my systematic observation and accompaniment of their sites of content creation, principally their blogs, also constituted a form of co-presence, albeit one in which my presence was largely invisible. I sought to make this visible in a more general sense by informing specific content creators of my interest and negotiating consent to follow their blogs for the purposes of my research, as I explain in the penultimate section of this chapter. However, the terms on which I engaged with internet content and its creators were a key area of (creative) tension in the project, given the interdisciplinary nature of my project and its focus on both texts and practices.

As I mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, there are key differences between literary and cultural approaches to internet content and human subjects approaches from the social sciences. Both were relevant to my project, but like Bassett and O'Riordan, whose work I discuss in detail in the section on 'Research ethics', I found that neither position entirely fitted the specific considerations arising in my own project. I therefore sought approaches to texts from within the social sciences, and in the next section, I explore existing anthropological and ethnographic work on texts. I conclude the section by introducing work from new literacy studies which links texts and practices, leading into the following section where I explain how I have adapted a specific methodological concept from new literacy studies in my own research. As I show, I have incorporated methodological approaches from different fields in my project, and this interdisciplinarity ultimately enabled me to find solutions to some of the issues that arose.

Bringing together texts and practices

Scholars working on textual production in contexts unrelated to the internet have argued that texts have been neglected in anthropological research, and that while they have often been used as data, they have been kept in the background and/or subordinated to other forms of data, particularly those which are oral or practice-related (Barber 2007; Blommaert 2008; Barton & Papen 2010). Anthropologist Karin Barber (2007: 17), who works primarily on African oral poetry, compares how British social anthropology and American cultural anthropology have approached texts and finds that in the former, texts have often been treated as 'a methodological means to an end'. They have been 'suppressed' (Barber 2007:

19) in research write-ups, and not studied in their own right. Texts have been much more prominent in the work of American anthropologists, foregrounded at all stages of the ethnographic process,[66] but although their tradition can be seen as 'an anthropology to, for, by, with and from texts' (Barber 2007: 19), Barber does not consider it 'an anthropology *of* texts, at least not in the sense of an anthropology that seeks to understand texts and textual traditions *in the light of something else*' (2007: 21; emphasis in original). This 'something else' that Barber refers to is 'social relationships', which she places at the heart of her own anthropology of texts, asking 'in what ways verbal textuality arises from, and in turn helps to shape, social relationships' (2007: 29).

Blommaert, who also works on African texts, makes similar points about how grassroots texts have been neglected and, like Barber, calls for attention to textuality itself as an important area of ethnographic analysis:

> Scholars, to be sure, have *used* such texts. But often they have insufficiently attended to the features that make such texts into what they are: products of grassroots literacy that demand close inspection of their formal features, the linguistic, stylistic and material resources that were used in them, and the various constraints that operated on this process. Thus, whereas scholars seemed rather at ease methodologically in ethnographies of oral performance data, their treatment of text was often less than ethnographic: texts were not presented as they were but *normatively reorganised* (or re-entextualised) and the status of the texts remained methodologically unclear. (Blommaert 2008: 10; emphasis in original)

Blommaert and Barber therefore unite in drawing attention to an underdeveloped area of research, or to a methodological gap or problem which needs to be addressed. Blommaert (2008: 12) himself calls for 'an ethnography of text' and takes a more linguistic approach, whereas Barber argues for the development of 'a concrete, historical anthropology of texts', continuing,

> We need an approach that can grasp together the local specificity of textual production and the larger historical forces and trends that profoundly affect without fully determining it. And to grasp the originality of the local, texts need to be seen in relation to the textual fields from which they emerge and into which they return. (Barber 2007: 223)

Like Blommaert, Barber advocates a detailed focus on texts themselves, and notes in the introduction to her book that her approach is influenced by the fact that her first degree was in English, at a time when New Criticism was in vogue. As she writes,

> the only way to start, and the only place to end up, is with actual texts. We have to apprehend just how the words work. Too many anthropological excursions into other people's texts hover above this level of specificity – contenting themselves with summarising plots, paraphrasing prose or extracting symbols and themes from poems. But New Criticism was right about one thing: there is no substitute for the words themselves, no alternative route to access whatever

[66] Barber (2007: 20) notes that in American anthropology, 'text was simultaneously data, method, and outcome'.

it is that texts are doing and saying. Attending carefully to *those* words, in *that* form, is the heart of the enterprise. (Barber 2007: 225; emphasis in original)

These approaches to text, which differ a little from each other but still have much in common, have been important to me in developing my own approach. However, as the above citations imply, both Barber and Blommaert focus directly on texts as the ethnographic field and principle category of ethnographic data, and to some extent the practices of production and circulation associated with them (or their materiality, in the case of Blommaert). In my own approach, while I have paid close attention to texts (or content), I have also sought out and incorporated the narratives of content creators to help situate that content in a wider context. Connecting content to the multiple sites of its production, reception and (re)interpretation in this way implies, then, that local content as a research object comprises more than just texts, and should also be thought of as encompassing practices.[67]

One area of research where texts and practices have been fruitfully combined is (new) literacy studies. New literacy studies is a mainly Anglophone field of research that has developed over the past thirty years and which examines the role of reading and writing in society from an often multidisciplinary, and primarily ethnographic, perspective (Barton & Papen 2010: 11).[68] It focuses on largely everyday, vernacular texts, often unpublished or unbroadcast in the conventional sense, although this is changing with the internet. However, even here practices have tended to dominate the analysis to a certain extent, with the focus being 'how written texts fit into the practices of people's lives, rather than the other way around' (Barton & Hamilton 1998: 257). Nonetheless, the authors of one major study looking at literacy practices in Lancaster in northern England concluded that many of the texts that they had encountered in the course of the research were interesting in their own right, and that such texts deserved closer attention in future work. As they argued, there is potentially rich data to be 'generated by a strategy of identifying significant texts from a study of

[67] In this respect I also draw on a different area of anthropological research, namely anthropological or ethnographic approaches to the media, in which practice has become an increasingly prominent focus (Bräuchler & Postill 2010). As Nick Couldry has pointed out, a new paradigm has emerged in media research, which aims 'to decentre media research from the study of media texts or production structures (important though these are) and to redirect it onto the study of the open-ended range of practices focused directly or indirectly on media. This places media studies firmly within a broader sociology of action and knowledge (or if you prefer, cultural anthropology or cognitive anthropology), and sets it apart from versions of media studies formulated within the paradigm of literary criticism' (2010: 36-37). In this way, while scholars in other areas of anthropology have been advocating greater attention to texts, the reverse approach can be discerned in certain areas of media studies where there has been a move away from a textual focus, and the anthropologists active in this area have often preferred to focus primarily on practices.

[68] See pages 11-14 of Barton and Papen's (2010) introductory chapter for a detailed overview of new literacy studies. While literacy studies researchers have mainly been English-speaking themselves, their research has included consideration of literacy practices in other languages and countries.

practices and moving between the analysis of texts and practices in a cyclical way to develop an understanding of contemporary literacies' (Barton & Hamilton 1998: 258).

I have attempted an approach inspired by this cyclical movement between texts and practices in my own study, although clearly my focus is not on literacy per se. However, a more recent edited collection has brought together work in the anthropology of writing from France with work by new literacy scholars from the UK, and therefore repositioned new literacy studies as part of a broader field of inquiry. In the introduction to the volume, the editors argue that there is a 'compelling' case for studying writing from an anthropological perspective (Barton & Papen 2010: 6). They argue it is often possible to connect 'ordinary' texts, part of ordinary life, to 'broad, complex and at times extraordinary social events', and that this field of research therefore touches on 'issues that are at the heart of contemporary anthropology: knowledge and power, identity, social change and the interface between local and global spaces' (Barton & Papen 2010: 10). Finally, Barton and Papen argue that the study of writing is important because of its centrality in contemporary life and the emergence of new writing practices associated with the availability of new technologies, as well as broader cultural shifts in knowledge production and communication. My research focus on local content creation on the internet by residents of a marginalised urban area in Brazil clearly reflects such developments.

Content events and the communicative ecology of local content

Reflecting the resonance of core concerns from new literacy studies in my own research project, it is this field that provided me with a specific methodological concept, that of the literacy event. I adapted it to the context of my research and it has proved extremely useful in approaching local content as both text and site of practices. The term 'literacy event' is employed in literacy studies to refer to 'observable episodes which arise from practices and are shaped by them' and often have written texts at their heart (Barton & Hamilton 1998: 7) and originates in the work of American linguistic anthropologist Shirley Brice Heath. In their influential interpretation of the term, Barton and Hamilton explain that literacy events are 'empirical and observable' (1998: 14) and 'located in time and space' (1998: 23).[69] In their

[69] In literacy studies, literacy events are closely related to literacy practices, which are less empirical and more theoretical, and provide 'a way of bringing in broader cultural and structural aspects and linking to issues of power' (Barton & Papen 2010: 12). Work on empirical literacy events, then, allows researchers to understand broader literacy practices.

book, they consider two examples of literacy events in the Lancaster neighbourhood where they carried out their research, one which was 'precisely time-bounded and regular' (the Annual General Meeting of the local Allotment Association), and the other which was 'an unexpected sequence of events taking place over a period of time' (a campaign which developed when the allotments in question were threatened by plans to build houses on their land) (Barton & Hamilton 1998: 209). This pair of examples shows how literacy events, although often arising from everyday activities, can also be more exceptional and dramatic. Inspired by this concept, then, I have developed the idea of the 'content event' as a way to connect local content texts and the practices involved in their production, publication and dissemination across different platforms. In my study, I consider three empirical cases incorporating content events: the mobilisation, around a particular text about a local conflict, by the text's author and by his contacts and friends (chapter 4), a writing competition for writers from a particular neighbourhood, promoted by a local writer, which then expanded its scope to suburban and periphery neighbourhoods more broadly speaking (chapter 5), and thematic clusters of local content published over a period of time by an individual blogger (chapter 6). In my analysis of these events, in a parallel with Androutsopoulos' discourse-centred online ethnography, I incorporate my own ethnographic observations, close readings of relevant texts and other material published on the internet, and the narratives of the content creators whose activities lie at their heart, 'in order to illuminate relations between digital texts and their production and reception practices' (Androutsopoulos 2008: n.p.).

My use of the term content event also draws on what is known as a 'communicative ecology' approach, although this too has undergone some adaptation in my project. Rather than focusing on 'the complete picture of communication and information flows in a locale' (Slater, Tacchi & Lewis 2002: 56), as in the original conceptualisation of the term, I have looked instead at the communication and information flows associated with particular local content sites or texts (themselves with a largely place-based focus), which unfold both on internet platforms and through other means of communication. In this way, my approach could be described as an exploration of the communicative ecology of specific instances of local content. Place is still centrally important in this communicative ecology, of course, but the entry point to it, although informed by place, was content representing a physical location, rather than that physical location itself, as I outline below.

My analysis includes attention to the technological, social and discursive layers of the communicative ecology in question, an approach proposed by Foth and Hearn (2007) and

applied by Button and Partridge (2007). I have also drawn on a similar approach developed specifically in relation to blogs by Brazilian researcher Adriana Braga (2008), since blogs have been at the heart of my project. Working from a media ecology perspective, and orienting her research around the interactive forum of a single (Brazilian) blog, Braga employed the term '*circuito-blogue*' (blog circuit) to capture the full range of media used and referenced by forum participants, or the broader 'communicative circuit' which included related blogs, Orkut, Fotologs, chat, face-to-face meet-ups, phone calls and a closed discussion list (Braga 2008: 102).[70] The blog analysed by Braga also gave rise to a monthly magazine column, a book and a television series. The 'blog circuit' formulation is particularly relevant to my research due to the way it embraces multiple communicative flows and sites or spin-offs (including those in media other than the internet), which relate to a focal communicative – or research – object. Such flows across multiple platforms and media were a central feature of the content I examined.

As I have shown in this section and the one that preceded it, I have drawn on anthropological and ethnographic approaches to writing and texts, as well as methodological concepts developed in ethnographic studies of ICT use and internet discourse, in developing my own methodology for the study of largely internet-based texts and related practices. I have so far not dealt with the issue of authorship, yet this is an aspect of grassroots writing which is undergoing significant transformations as a result of the internet. As Barber (2007: 222) notes, 'opportunities for individuals to project their personal writings into public space have multiplied, with desktop publishing and the rise of the blog. Authorship has proliferated while the aura of author as cultural originator has dispersed'. Authorship is a key concern of literary and cultural approaches to internet content, but must also be addressed in a hybrid approach such as my own which is influenced by social sciences approaches to text. I now examine some of the specific methodological and ethical questions associated with studying texts published on the internet by individuals (rather than established and well-known authors), before moving on to a more practical discussion of how I constructed my field site through mapping and the identification of entry points.

[70] Orkut is the most popular social network site in Brazil, and Fotolog is a photograph-sharing site which has also been intensively used by Brazilians. For more on trends in Brazilian digital culture, see chapter 3.

Research ethics: Traceability, authorship, agency and visibility

Studying writing on the internet, whether directly or indirectly, raises new challenges for researchers. The most significant of these is the potential traceability of citations from research participants' online work if these are included verbatim in research write-ups. This characteristic of the mediated field, which cannot be considered either negative or positive in itself, forces researchers to directly confront issues of 'anonymity, visibility, exposure, ownership and authorship' (Beaulieu & Estalella 2011: 10) when thinking about how to generate and present data, and when developing solutions to ethical questions and considerations arising in fieldwork. These may go beyond or even against traditional tenets of ethnography and qualitative research. In particular, they may make it very difficult to guarantee anonymity to research participants.

However, some scholars working in such mediated field sites (as well as in other types of contemporary networked field sites) have begun to suggest that (complete) anonymity may not in fact be necessary or appropriate in all contexts. Although it has been noted that current approaches to anonymisation in internet research are often too thin,[71] scholars have pointed out that not citing from internet content on principle would cause significant challenges, and even make unviable, research into discourse and rhetoric on the internet and its subsequent publication (Hine 2000; Banks & Eble 2007). As Hine (2000: 24) suggests, 'situated compromise[s]' may be therefore be necessary when writing up and reporting on such research; she argues that fundamentally, 'it is the ethnographer's task to find out during the ethnography what is considered sensitive, not as an additional task but as a part of the ethnography itself'. This is a more general point about ethnography but one with particular resonance in internet research, given the potential for data to be traced. One perspective on this matter comes from Franklin, who developed her approach to the citation of internet discussion threads over several years of consultation with participants in her research into Pacific discussion forums. Based on this, Franklin (2004: 71) argues that 'online texts and their authors demand the same level of courtesy and citation rigor as any other written source'.[72] She also notes that she would 'respectfully disagree with the principle of absolute anonymity as a hard and fast rule for online research scenarios. What is intended as

[71] This was one of the conclusions of a workshop on internet research ethics held at the Association of Internet Researchers conference in October 2010. See Internet Research Ethics (2010).

[72] Franklin (2004: 71) also justified this decision as one which followed both academic conventions and 'Pacific notions of "due respect"'.

protection can operate as a form of erasure too' (Franklin 2004: 203, drawing on Fabian 1983).

A similar point about the risk of erasure is made by Bassett and O'Riordan (2002), in a methodological essay reflecting on decisions taken in an earlier project looking at a website for young lesbians. As they note, one of the aims of the website in question was to achieve greater visibility for a marginalised group, which is often overlooked by the mainstream media. They suggest that researchers working with this kind of material should not implement approaches which would undermine such an intention. As they argue, '[t]he politics of representation create an imperative for the researcher to preserve the same level of visibility', noting also that academic discussion of the work of such groups can 'potentially add to their cultural capital, legitimise and increase acceptance of the diversity of culture' (Bassett & O'Riordan 2002: 243). In my research this consideration of visibility applies not only to the individuals or groups involved, but also to the particular favela they come from, given the centrality of place in the content under study. It is also worth noting the observation that the greater visibility potentially afforded by citation of internet content may be welcomed by some internet content creators, such as bloggers, but this may not be the case for all groups (Beaulieu & Estalella 2011: 12). In my research these categories converge, since I focus on the work of bloggers who are also members of a marginalised group seeking greater visibility or visibility on more favourable terms. When speaking to me, they emphasised the public nature of their content.

Nonetheless, in their own work, Bassett and O'Riordan (2002: 240) opted for what they describe as the '"safest" option', in other words, a human subjects approach, assigning pseudonyms to the website and its participants. They explain that this choice was influenced by peer review and editorial advice when preparing the research write-up for publication, as well as the characteristics of the interaction on the website's forum and a statement made by one particular participant about the need to maintain her privacy. However, based on their ongoing reflection about the research experience and the issues it raised, Bassett and O'Riordan make the case for greater disclosure in future projects with a similar focus, arguing that '[o]verly protective research ethics risk diminishing the cultural capital of those engaging in cultural production through Internet technologies, and inadvertently contributing to their

further marginalization' (2002: 244).[73] This reflection is certainly pertinent when thinking about how to deal with content produced about favelas by their residents, given a central motivation for the publication and dissemination of such content is precisely to combat the lack of visibility and negative portrayal of these neighbourhoods in the Brazilian mainstream media. Nonetheless, this same media environment, and the political and social context it reflects, as well as the ongoing violence in some favelas also mean that some special precautions remain necessary when carrying out and writing up research with favela residents, as I discuss in the sections on constructing my field site and informed consent.[74]

In a project with similarities to Bassett and O'Riordan's research on a lesbian website, William Banks and Michele Eble (2007) also opted for a more cautious approach when writing up their study of blogs maintained by young gay men, delinking rhetorical analysis of these blogs from material gathered through direct interaction, surveys and interviews. Nonetheless, they raised similar questions about the implications for the diminished authority and agency potentially afforded to blog authors, as compared to conventionally published authors, by treating their work in a different way in research. Both sets of researchers cited above therefore felt that existing ethical guidelines and approaches were not necessarily appropriate to their work, or did not yet directly engage with the type of decision-making required of researchers studying textual production on the internet by marginalised groups.

Throughout their research, Bassett and O'Riordan had a sense that they were 'piecing together elements from different models, none of which were entirely satisfactory' (2002: 244), a sentiment which I also experienced in my own project. Their discussion of the methodological and ethical 'tensions between social texts and social spaces, and between representations and people' in approaches to internet research, as O'Riordan (2010: n.p.) described the (ongoing) problem in a later piece she contributed to a collection of texts about e-research ethics, therefore has strong resonance in the challenges and decisions I have faced in my own research. As Bassett and O'Riordan point out, when the internet is understood as a 'space' or 'site' for interaction, as is often the case, the human subjects

[73] Barton and Hamilton report on similar decision-making in their study of literacy practices in Lancaster. They note their sympathy with two different models of research ethics, the social science tradition which favours anonymity of research participants, and the community and adult education tradition which privileges their voice and right to be heard and named. They opted to assign pseudonyms to individual participants and to the neighbourhood where the research took place, but named the city, noting the importance of 'anchor[ing] [reading and writing] to particular times and places' (Barton & Hamilton 1998: 63). They also named city-based institutions and public individuals, but found that 'in between the city and individuals there were a surprising number of decisions which had to be made about anonymity' (Barton & Hamilton 1998: 63).

[74] I also touch on related issues in chapter 3.

model tends to be applied. However, they also draw attention to an alternative interpretation which foregrounds the textuality of the internet, and therefore requires a different methodological and ethical stance, particularly where marginalised groups are the focus of the research: 'The Internet is not simply a virtual space in which human actors can be observed: it is a medium through which a wide variety of statements are produced' (Bassett & O'Riordan 2002: 234). They conclude that both of these approaches are relevant, although the balance between them will vary from project to project. What is needed, they conclude, is 'a hybrid model of relational ethics that incorporates text, space and bodies' (Bassett & O'Riordan 2002: 245), to enable the production of 'research that examines the complex intersection of technologies, form, genre and content that the Internet supports' (Bassett & O'Riordan 2002: 244). I have attempted to develop and implement such a hybrid approach in my project.

One specific challenge mentioned by Bassett and O'Riordan was the relative absence of ethical approaches specifically associated with the study of texts, in contrast with those designed according to the human subjects model. They provide a brief overview of existing scholarly approaches to the relationship between (mainly print) text and author (text as a direct reflection of the author's values; text as object to be analysed independently of its author, readers or the conditions of its production; and the text viewed principally through the lens of the reader's response and the meaning this creates). They find more fertile ground for an ethical approach to personal texts, one which takes into consideration the role of authors of such texts, in the field of Life Writing and particularly the work of Katherine Borland. Although Borland (1991: 73 cited in Bassett & O'Riordan 2002: 240) advocates a sensitive approach to such texts, given the link between them and real people, she does not conflate authors with their textual narratives; her approach involves an exchange between the researcher and the author of the text, but also engagement with the text itself by the researcher.

In my own research, I have drawn on another approach which proposes a rethinking of the relationship between text and author: fluid text analysis (Bryant 2002, 2007).[75] A fluid text, according to John Bryant (2007: 17), is 'any written work that exists in multiple material versions due to revisions (authorial, editorial, cultural) upon which we may construct an interpretation'. Whilst fluid text analysis does not explicitly engage with ethical issues, this

[75] See particularly chapter 4.

approach directly addresses the intentionality of the original author of a text as well as the influence and participation of other actors and forces on the text. Bryant thus suggests that authorial, editorial and cultural revision processes are central to understanding the meaning of texts, thereby seeking to work against what he calls the 'Intentional Fallacy Fallacy'. The Intentional Fallacy is the tendency by some critics to entirely rule out the author's intentions when analysing a text (Bryant 2002: 8). Whilst I believe I do not fall into the trap, identified by Bassett and O'Riordan, of conflating author and text in my own project, I did feel it was important to go beyond the published texts and other material accessible to me on the internet, to engage with content creators and to find out more about their intentions in making such content available, and the practices associated with the development, publication and dissemination of such content. Indeed, this intention was embedded in my research questions from the outset.

The ethical dimensions of the study of personal texts are also discussed by Blommaert, particularly in relation to one of the two case studies presented in his book *Grassroots Literacy*, namely a collection of letters sent by a Congolese man (whom he calls Julien) to his former Belgian employer, narrating his life story as a form of repayment for financial and other support provided to him and his family. However, as Blommaert (2008: 13) notes, he did not meet or interview Julien, observe him while writing or talk to other members of his community, as might have been the case in more conventional ethnographic research. Blommaert (2008: 89) also acknowledges some power asymmetries in the relationship he establishes with Julien's texts, and the resources available to him in analysing them (such as an archive of comparative documents, and what he calls the 'technology of knowledge'), compared to those Julien had at his own disposal. As Blommaert writes,

> I – and not Julien – can compare the 'facts', can spot coherence and incoherence, similiarities, gaps and overlaps [...] I can reconstruct a 'full' or 'complete' account of what he tells us. He himself cannot do that: *he is not in a position to do so,* literally. (2008: 89; emphasis in original)

Given this asymmetry, Blommaert suggests that his (re)construction of a story based on the material supplied by Julien (in a different context) therefore runs the risk of silencing Julien's own voice. He seeks to mitigate this ethical challenge, arising from fundamental structural inequalities, 'by making my own interpretive procedures explicit (like Fabian); and by showing my own subjectivity in these interpretive procedures (like Bourdieu)',[76] continuing that, 'I can only speak subjectively about his subjectivity, and to some extent this statement should be

[76] Blommaert (2008: 88) is here drawing on the work of Johannes Fabian (on ethnography as communication) and Pierre Bourdieu (on ethnographic epistemology) to stress that our research experiences, 'what we see and perceive and understand', are affected by the sociohistorical context in which they take place.

self evident' (Blommaert 2008: 89). I believe there is less of an asymmetry in my own project, because of my engagement with content creators and because my access to the texts and content sites analysed in this thesis more closely mirrored that of their original creators (or was actually more limited and partial than theirs), although there was still a sense that I was largely following and storing – as well as analysing – content in a more systematic way than they were.[77] This was something I raised with participants in interviews, both in terms of confirming that they were happy for me to maintain a record of their content, and also in relation to finding out more about their own practices in tracking and archiving their published content.

Eichhorn's experiences are also relevant to this discussion of the relationships ethnographers establish with the authors of texts. As Eichhorn notes, she initially set out to produce a text-based study of zines, imagining that she would therefore be able to 'to escape to the *imagined* stability and containability of texts' (2001: 569; emphasis in original), but from the moment she requested zines by post, she 'unintentionally initiated the process of negotiating access to a community' (2001: 569) and realised that she would need to develop an ethical stance on her interaction with the creators of the zines.[78] Still, the ambiguous status of zines, somewhere along the continuum between public and private referred to by Sveningsson Elm (2009), raised challenging dilemmas about consent and citation which prompted Eichhorn to question the very status of the zines as texts:

> Can 'texts' that promote the sort of interactivity and immersion experienced with 'zines [sic], as well as some forms of hypertext, continue to be understood as texts? At what point do these 'texts' become something entirely different? If so, what do they become, and what might the phenomena in question mean to the ethnographer, the literary theorist, and their respective disciplinary traditions? (Eichhorn 2001: 576)

At the beginning of my own project, I found myself strongly influenced by the human subjects model of ethics, given my intention to focus, at least in part, on the internet as a possible site for local interaction. This was probably also due to the fact that this model is fairly dominant in existing qualitative research on the internet, as Bassett and O'Riordan pointed out. From the outset, however, I highlighted the question of how to identify participants in research write-ups as one to be solved in the process of fieldwork, in consultation with them. This was based on an awareness that such decisions were likely not to be clear-cut in research

[77] Two participants commented that they did not have the full *histórico* (historical archive) of their blogs, and one described efforts to put in place a personalised system to better track the trajectory of content on the internet.
[78] Eichhorn also shared some of her own 'technology of knowledge' (cf. Blommaert) with participants in her research, by sending them books, magazines and articles about zines which they did not have access to, including some of those she was using in her academic work on the subject.

looking at internet content and the visibility and representation of marginalised places and groups.

As the research progressed and I began to look more closely at the work of individual content creators publishing via blogs and other platforms, I became more explicitly conscious of the textuality of the internet (although this is inseparable from its visual dimensions in the content I have looked at) and the role of local content creators as authors, who potentially deserved attribution should their work be cited. To some extent, therefore, I experienced the opposite of Eichhorn, who initially planned her research as a text-based study, and then became aware that she was researching people, not just texts. However, in line with the challenges outlined by Bassett and O'Riordan and discussed above, it was not possible for me to view the participants in my research only as authors (since I had not only engaged with their work as text), nor to see them only as human subjects. Although their texts were of central interest, the fact that I interacted with them via the internet and in person, and particularly through interviews, meant that the human subjects model was also of relevance, with its emphasis on the protection of research participants' privacy. However, important questions have been raised about whether it is in fact possible to conduct and report on text-based research on the internet whilst maintaining the privacy of those responsible for the creation of the content in question (Banks & Eble 2007: 39-40). The in-depth approach I took, which looked closely at the work of three individuals, also meant that it was not possible to follow the approach taken by some internet researchers, of separating interview material from internet content so as not to make it clear which statements relate to which blog (Banks & Eble 2007; Brake 2009: 76). However, the decision to focus so closely on the work of individuals was also a response to what I learned during fieldwork about how they saw their content and their aims in publishing it on the internet; clearly if they had told me that they viewed their content as private, an approach based on combining citation of that content with interview material would not have been suitable given the issues outlined above in relation to traceability of internet content.

Even once the decision to cite from internet content had been taken,[79] there remained the question of whether or not to use pseudonyms to identify its creators. As scholars have noted, the traceability of internet content means that pseudonyms may no longer be an effective way to provide anonymity and protect privacy in this type of research (Hine 2000;

[79] More detail on how this decision was reached is provided in the section on informed consent.

Banks & Eble 2007; Beaulieu & Estalella 2011). Amy Bruckman poses the central question faced by many internet researchers when she asks:

> Should [amateur artists] be treated as vulnerable human subjects whose privacy needs to be protected by hiding their online pseudonyms and real names? Or would that rob them of a legitimate claim to credit for their creative work? (2002: 228)

Bruckman herself proposes four practical approaches, arguing that a decision on how to address the question of identification should be taken on the basis of the risk associated with the research, and the degree to which the participants can be considered 'public figures'. She concludes that 'whether to change names must be decided on a case by case basis, depending on the subject, goals and methods of the particular study' (Bruckman 2002: 229). Bruckman's four approaches lie along a continuum, from no disguise to heavy disguise, and affect not only whether or not actual names will be published in research write-ups, but also have a knock-on effect for the nature of the data that may be included. However, unlike the suggestion made by Hine that a decision about what constitutes sensitive material should be made in the course of research, implying that the same iterative process is also employed in reaching a decision about how to deal with such material in research write-ups, Bruckman proposes that a decision should be taken at the outset so that it can be clearly communicated to potential research participants, enabling them to opt in or opt out based on the terms of the project. Of Bruckman's options, those with most relevance to my own research project are the 'no disguise' approach, in which pseudonyms and real names are used with the permission of the individual content creator, but potentially harmful details are omitted, and the 'light disguise' option, in which the group is named but personal names and other identifying details such as place, organisational and institutional names are changed. At the same time, however, verbatim quotes that could be used to identify an individual are used in this latter approach, and there is a recognition that both group members and outsiders could well discover participants' identities without too much effort. Again, potentially harmful details are omitted (Bruckman 2002: 229-230). In fact, my own solution lies somewhere between 'no disguise' and 'light disguise', as I outline in the penultimate section of this chapter. I have not gone as far as attempting to make authors of internet texts, whose texts and identities are already public, anonymous in research write-ups, as suggested by Wilkinson and Thelwall (2010: 1). However, I have not used the full names of the content creators I have studied, opting instead to identify them only by their first initial.

More broadly, beyond internet research, challenging questions have been raised about the anthropological practice of changing names of individuals, institutions and places:

> Is the methodological practice of changing the names of one's sources always ethical? Or can it also do harm? If anonymity is justified through its use in protecting sources from danger, what of an ethical obligation to allow sources to respond to and refute us? Why is anthropological knowledge often constructed in a way that only allows for debate among anthropologists, and then rarely over the 'facts,' [...] Is this truly always only for the purpose of protecting our 'human subjects,' or is it also about protecting ourselves? (May 2010: 10)

The overarching issue here appears to be the relationship between protection and accountability. This question is also addressed by Beaulieu and Estalella (2011: 14) who argue that the increased traceability of data in internet research could potentially offer new types of protection and accountability to research participants. Where anonymity does remain a pressing concern, due to the characteristics of the material or people under study, then scholars have suggested that alternative approaches to disguising field sites and participants may need to be developed in internet research. For example, one proposal is that textual content from the internet which is included in research write-ups can be paraphrased or altered to preempt the location of the original source using a search engine (Ess 2007 cited in Wilkinson & Thelwall 2010: 11).[80] However, in a study of content creation by marginalised groups, which explicitly seeks visibility as a way of countering long-standing invisibility, altering content would seem problematic, recalling the observations made by Bassett and O'Riordan. The alternative would be simply not to cite directly from content, but again, as indicated earlier, this would be challenging when the focus of the research is on the content itself. Nonetheless, in some circumstances these may be necessary trade-offs to protect research participants from potential harm and/or to protect their privacy. Ideally, researchers would make a decision on whether to cite from internet content produced by research participants based on a number of considerations, as proposed by Heidi McKee and James Porter (2009: 107), who suggest these should include 'the public-private nature of the communications (as potentially perceived by the participants), the sensitivity of the information, the vulnerability and the technological knowledge of participants'. Indeed, bloggers themselves often explicitly negotiate the question of visibility and traceability when deciding what to publish on the internet, particularly when they do so under their own name or under a pseudonymous identity which can be linked back to them. If data is collected about how they make decisions on this front, as was the case in my project, this can in turn be of some help in researcher decision-making about how to deal with internet content in research write-ups, although one should not lose sight of the need also to understand how bloggers view the relationship between their activities on the internet and other aspects of

[80] Other options that have been raised in this context are self-anonymisation of the researcher, or covert research (Beaulieu & Estalella 2011).

their life (the (in)famous online/offline question again). As I pointed out earlier in the chapter with reference to work by O'Riordan (2010), research into content published on the internet has to reconcile the tensions associated with approaching content both as representation, and as the work of specific people.

This chapter has so far focused on the influences and principles guiding my methodology, as well as some of the tensions and key issues arising from its interdisciplinary focus. I now provide a more practical overview of how the methodology was developed and implemented during the research process, and the specific methods used. I begin by outlining how I went about constructing my field site, beginning with a mapping process and the exploration of different potential entry points.

Constructing a networked field site: Communicative ecology mapping and entry points

As noted in the introduction to this chapter, my fieldwork lasted for thirteen months, during which time I was based in the metropolitan area of Rio de Janeiro. However, I have lived and worked in Rio de Janeiro since the end of 2003, and in developing and undertaking this research project I have drawn on contacts and knowledge developed over the course of the intervening years until beginning my PhD studies. Given this existing base in Rio, I therefore made additional trips to the city before and after the official fieldwork period, during which I conducted additional exploratory and follow-up research. At least in the early stages of the fieldwork, I largely worked from home on the internet, but as the project progressed, I began to spend more time visiting relevant places, attending events and meeting people, whilst still maintaining my activities on the internet.

Even with the trope of following in mind as a key principle, determining what or who to follow, and the resulting entry points, proved a challenge. Like Dana Walker in her research into 'internet-enabled civic talk' (2010: 24) in the city of Philadephia, I 'struggled to define a manageable field site' (2010: 33). Like Walker, I found that early following and mapping of a variety of local content sites helped me to narrow down my research object and ultimately to construct a viable and more focused field site. In the early stages of my project, for example, I asked myself whether I should begin with the local content which could be discovered and accessed via the internet, and its producers, and construct the field site from this starting or entry point (I imagined this to be 'following the content'), or whether should I rather begin with

a particular geographic location (such as an internet café or cafés in specific locations), make contact with some internet users, and see what content they were generating (which I imagined as 'following the people'). I concluded that I could probably fruitfully combine both approaches, and that they were likely to overlap, but ultimately decided to give prominence to the 'following the content' side of the approach (which then also became, to some extent, 'following the content (creators)', approximating to 'following the people').

Although I did not decide this in advance of beginning the fieldwork, I eventually decided to focus my initial efforts on content produced by residents of the Maré favela complex in northern Rio, reflecting the fact that I had already been there on several occasions and had personal contacts working in local NGOs. Such contacts are very important for carrying out viable research in favelas, as McCann (2006: 154) has noted with particular reference to the role of residents' associations as gatekeepers. If not institutional contacts, being accompanied by a local resident is certainly advisable when visiting a favela for the first time, or beginning more regular visits, as Delvalhas Piccolo has noted:

> This accompaniment allows the access of the 'stranger' inside the favela, allowing him or her to pass the symbolic frontier [...] without the trajectory being interrupted by members of the drug gangs, for example, seeking an explanation of what the person is doing there. [...] The care of the visitor continues until the moment when the person becomes a familiar face, and their presence there becomes regular.[81] (2008: 33)

Although I followed these conventions on my initial visits to Maré for research purposes, I was also able to contact and interact with content creators directly via the internet, without the need for all of the same precautions. After an initial visit to local internet cafés, which are known as *lan houses* in Brazil,[82] accompanied by a local community leader, which I describe in more detail below, I also visited *lan houses* on my own.

As I hope will become clear as I discuss the detailed construction of my field site, this is not a study directly about Maré, and I therefore did not concentrate my fieldwork in the area as such. Whilst I did not see the physical location of Maré as my field in itself, following my reflections on the construction of networked and multi-sited ethnographic fields in earlier sections of this chapter, I did consider it important to go there when opportunities arose,

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[81] My translation of the original Portuguese: *'Esse acompanhamento permite o acesso do 'estranho' ao interior do morro, possibilitando que ele ultrapasse a fronteira simbólica [...] sem que o percurso seja interrompido interrompido por integrantes do tráfico, por exemplo, em busca de explicações para o que se está fazendo lá. [...] O cortejo do visitante ocorre até o momento em que a pessoa passe a ser um rosto conhecido, a sua presença ali torna-se familiar.'* Unless otherwise stated, all translations in this thesis are my own.

[82] The '*lan*' in *lan house* stands for a local area network, which enables networked games to be played. Lemos and Martini (2010: 31) note that the term *lan house* originated in Korea and other parts of Asia.

given my central interest in place and its representation in internet content. However, as I explain in more detail in the final section of the chapter, as far as possible I went wherever my field took me, or rather, where the content and content creators I was following took me – and geographically this included Maré, but it also included other areas of the city of Rio de Janeiro, reflecting to some extent content creators' own movements through the city, and beyond.[83] This explains why I have not included a traditional in-depth ethnographic description of Maré in this thesis, although I provide some background on the area at the end of chapter 3 to aid in an understanding of its significance for definitions and representations of favelas, and visibility of favelas, both in the geographical and imaginary landscape of the city.

I would argue, however, that Maré, the neighbourhood, certainly constituted one of the early entry points to my field. This reflects Hine's (2000: 60) suggestion, inspired by the work of Hastrup and Olwig, that researchers might follow connections made 'meaningful and visible' from a particular place. In fact, I suggest that one can think in terms of stages or layers of entry points to one's field, particularly when the field in question is a networked field site. Since my focus was on place and its representation in internet content, the contours of my field site were defined by content about Maré. In the early stages of the research, I mapped internet content being produced by residents (and to a lesser extent, projects or institutions) in Maré, in order to begin the process of identifying potential field sites or potential elements or components of a field site. This largely internet-based mapping involved searching for and documenting blogs and websites, as well as communities on the social network site Orkut,[84] with a geographical and thematic orientation to the favela and which appeared to be authored by individuals, groups or sometimes organisations from the area. For this purpose I used the Google search engine, trying never to forget its imperfect nature as a way of identifying relevant content published on the internet (Maclean 2008: 871; Halavais 2009), but I also ran searches via other content platforms such as Orkut and YouTube (themselves platforms owned by Google). I tended to search using a variant of the name of the overall area or one of the sub-areas of the favela complex, sometimes adding a term like 'blog' to try

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[83] However, as Burrell (2009) found in her fieldwork, there were places that I was unable to visit in person, but which I still considered part of my field site since they were referenced in content or interview material.

[84] 'Communities' on Orkut are geographically or thematically oriented groups, which users of the site can join. Each community has its own page on the platform, which usually includes an image and a description of the community, as well as a forum. Polls and other forms of interaction are also common. Communities are run by 'owners' and moderators, and can be moderated or unmoderated (private communities also exist, where the content is only visible to members).

to narrow down the search to user-generated content about the area. I also followed links from content sites I already knew of from the area.[85]

When it came to documenting this early mapping, I used two specific internet platforms, namely the social bookmarking site delicious [sic],[86] and a password-protected research blog I created using the Wordpress blogging software.[87] I also sometimes combined or linked the two platforms. For example, for a time during fieldwork I configured my delicious account so that it would automatically post a daily summary of the latest sites I had bookmarked to my research blog, thereby enabling me to 'follow myself' and to insert the traces of my internet searching and mapping as part of my field diary.[88] Whilst the sites I bookmarked on delicious during this time related to the broader overall contours of my research project and did not only include those relevant to an interest in local content produced by favela residents (they also incorporated references about the broader field of digital culture in Brazil, as well as links relating to theoretical and methodological aspects), this record was very useful to me in writing up my thesis. To some extent therefore, my delicious bookmarks could be considered a form of research blogging. I also used a designated page within my private Wordpress blog to list and categorise the different blogs, Orkut communities and other relevant local content sites I had identified relating to Maré.

Following links from particular local content sites (from designated blogrolls or links or from within posts on blogs or in forums) was also a fruitful strategy in these early stages – and indeed on an ongoing basis. One challenge I faced was how to document the process of what I referred to in my research blog as 'that random [process] of following links and going

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[85] This prior knowledge of some relevant sites was another motivation for focusing my research on this particular neighbourhood, but also means that it is necessary to present the caveat that just because there is a cluster of local content produced by residents of this particular favela, whether interlinked or not, does not mean that the same is necessarily true for favelas in general. Indeed, the same diversity that characterises favelas in all other aspects is more than likely to be equally true of the internet content produced by their residents, as a reflection of that diversity. For more on the diversity of favelas, see chapter 3.

[86] Note that delicious has a private bookmarks feature which I used for sites I considered more sensitive or personal, conscious of the traceability of my own research activities on the internet (Franklin 2004; Beaulieu & Estalella 2011).

[87] For an account of a public blog as a 'personal thinking space' in a PhD research project, see Efimova (2009). My own blog was private and only accessed by myself, but shared many of the same functions in personal information management and aiding the writing up process. In particular, it often formed the raw material for updates to my supervisors, that later became raw material for chapters and other written outputs. However, it is important to note that I kept separate fieldnotes about my interactions with content creators in a notebook and in documents stored locally on my computer, for security reasons. In this way my research blog did not function as the (only) field diary as such, but as a useful complement to it. However, the dispersed nature of the material generated on the blog and in other documents posed a challenge in analysis and writing up.

[88] I eventually opted to turn off this regular posting from delicious because it was quite disruptive to the flow of the research blog, given the volume of links.

off on major but very relevant tangents' (research blog, 1 February 2009). Two days later, posting an update sent to my supervisors by email, I noted that 'I would like to better document this process of how I get from one site to the next and how I make and follow connections which in turn enable me to accumulate knowledge' (research blog, 3 February 2009). As Halavais (2009: 39, drawing on Webber 2002) reminds us, 'search is not only an iterative process, but one that is rarely linear and requires seeking out the concepts that surround a problem or question'; elsewhere, he also highlights the importance of serendipity, as 'part of the experienced searcher's retinue of skills' (Halavais 2009: 54). Reflecting this, I developed a hybrid system for identifying and mapping relevant content, which involved tagging, linking, and occasional copying and pasting of relevant content on both my research blog and delicious, accompanied by note-taking. I also began to take screenshots of sites. The open-ended, emerging nature of user-generated content on web 2.0 platforms, as well as of my field site itself, meant that flexibility was required, enabling me to follow the connections that presented themselves in this early phase of the research process. Recalling these initial stages now makes me think of a comment by anthropologist Thomas Belmonte (2005: 3) about beginning his own fieldwork in Naples: 'In those early days I was apprehending only the surfaces of things, but there is much to be learned from surfaces'.

I also used internet tools to 'pull' in relevant content, namely RSS, where available, and I also set up relevant Google Alerts[89] for content relating to 'Complexo da Maré'. This did not produce a predictable or regular flow of content, nor did it by any means pick up everything being published on the internet about the neighbourhood. The nature of the content that did reach me via this route was a little eclectic, but the alert enabled me to find content in both Portuguese and English that I might not have come across otherwise and to situate local content produced by residents in a broader context. In this way, therefore, I was able to 'automate' some of my following, although it also proved important to follow sites more manually, through regular visits and exploration, as I discuss in more detail below.

I also undertook some exploratory observations and analysis of the flow and nature of the content being published on the sites I identified through this initial mapping, and particularly on geographically oriented communities on Orkut. I carried out searches on Orkut to identify communities relating to Maré, identifying further communities by looking at the 'related communities' or conducting further searches based on key words identified through

[89] Google Alerts are regular automated emails giving the latest Google results based on a specific search query.

browsing. The aim of these initial searches was both to identify the communities with the largest number of members, and to get an overview of the variety and diversity of Orkut communities relating to a particular favela, including much smaller communities, with a view to deciding whether Orkut would be a promising site for my research. This approach was influenced by Androutsopoulos' proposal for discourse-centred online ethnography, in particular his suggestions that researchers should: 'identify key nodes in a network of websites and then browse through to peripheral nodes, using for this purpose any orientation resources available in the field', 'visit websites and discussion areas of interest repeatedly, in order to develop a "feel" for their discourses, emblems, and language styles' and 'attend to the openness and fluidity of online discourse', browsing around rather than focusing in on a particular section too soon (2008: n.p.). However, I ultimately decided not to focus my research on Orkut, for reasons I outline below.

As I have already briefly mentioned, in the early phases of my fieldwork, whilst exploring the broader contours of my research topic, I also visited three *lan houses* (internet cafés) in Maré with the help of contacts at a local NGO. I was accompanied by a local resident and community leader, who introduced me to the person in charge of each *lan house,* enabling me to conduct brief, informal interviews with them. I also later returned to two of the *lan houses* on my own several times, used the internet and continued informal conversations with the people running them. Nonetheless, I did not pursue the *lan houses* as a central focus of my research. Overall, I felt that internet content itself represented a more promising entry point for my research and I decided to prioritise this. Nonetheless, the visits I made to *lan houses* in Maré gave me an insight into the broader field of digital culture in Maré and enabled me to refine and focus my research questions.[90] In this way, they can also be considered a fieldwork entry point of sorts.

After my initial observations of relevant content sites on the internet, I therefore began to narrow down which seemed most of interest. Due to my interest in place and locality, I sought out content which explicitly engaged with place. However, rather than factual information about the neighbourhood of Maré and 'the sharing of relevant, localised everyday life information' available on neighbourhood websites (Button & Partridge 2007: 1) or the city-wide discussion forum studied by Walker and Wehner (2009), I looked for more self-reflexive representations of place. That is, rather than content which simply related local information or

[90] I discuss *lan houses* and their significance for digital inclusion and digital culture in Brazil in the following chapter, where I also share some of my observations from my visits to *lan houses* in Maré.

announced local cultural events, or 'conversations about the everyday problems and experiences of the city' (Walker & Wehner 2009: 6) or neighbourhood, my focus was increasingly on content which explicitly offered representations of Maré from a resident's point of view. Although my observations thus far indicated that blogging was much more of a minority activity among local residents than Orkut use, it seemed that I was more likely to find this kind of content on blogs than on Orkut. Nonetheless, as I explain on the coming pages, Orkut played a crucial role in leading me to relevant content published on blogs.

As the research progressed, I also refined these criteria further to include local content that also in some way went beyond the local, and those content creators who were engaged in broader dissemination of their content using different internet platforms. Most importantly perhaps in practical terms, I targeted content creators who provided sufficient information and details about themselves to make it possible to contact them using a private channel, and who were interested and willing to participate in the research. However, it is important to acknowledge that these criteria emerged in the process of the research rather than being pre-determined in advance, and could only really be listed in a coherent fashion once the research was well underway or perhaps even once the data collection was complete.

When I began to try to establish contact with the people responsible for those of interest to me, my initial focus was therefore mainly on moderators or owners of Orkut communities and bloggers, and my intention was to introduce myself and my project and to explain my interest in their content creation or curation activities. I developed a simple profile on Orkut with very brief information about myself and my research, linking to a static blog providing a little more detail and a link to my university page.[91] This was designed to help people in verifying my identity. I also made the decision to call myself Victoria rather than Tori (as I am usually known) when contacting people who did not already know me, since my experience in Brazil thus far indicated that my full name was more familiar to people and left less ambiguity about my gender.[92] As much as possible, I used private channels for initial contact (usually email), rather than leave online traces of the interactions, but in several cases, where contact details were not publicly available, it was necessary to leave a brief message (via an Orkut scrap or blog comment) noting my interest in getting in touch in relation to a research project and

[91] The blog itself was in Portuguese, but the university webpage was in English and I made this clear on the blog. Note this blog is different to the password-protected research blog mentioned earlier.

[92] In this choice I was also partly influenced by a similar choice made by Hine (2000: 74) to sign her initial emails to potential participants as Christine rather than Chris.

leaving my email address (a webmail address specifically created for the purposes of the research).

I did not receive very many answers from the moderators of Orkut communities, but I was more successful with bloggers, and this helped to narrow down the focus of my project and to refine and pinpoint the object of study and research questions within the overall interest in local content. Nonetheless, I did carry out one early exploratory interview with the moderator of an Orkut community associated with the favela. In follow-up contact after the interview, I explained to the moderator that while the community was not a focus of research in itself, I was interested in some of the messages being posted in its forum and would contact relevant posters directly to seek their consent to incorporate the material into my research. For a time during the early stages of the fieldwork, this same Orkut community incorporated a feed of news items about Maré from external sources, but this was eventually removed. However, while available, it constituted another resource available within the field to help me orient myself (Androutsopoulos 2008) and another way of following content about a specific place in an automated, filtered way.

Although I did not continue my observations on Orkut, this particular community was crucial in leading me to two of the content creators whose work is discussed in the case studies presented here, after they posted messages in its forum. In this way, while ultimately not part of the field in and of itself, this Orkut community was a key entry point to what was to become my field. In line with my communicative ecology perspective, content I saw posted on Orkut led me to content hosted and published on other internet platforms, including blogs. This provided me with insights about the way local content creators may work across multiple platforms, which were fundamental in shaping my project and its ongoing theoretical and methodological orientation. My early observations on Orkut also deepened my awareness of the many different types of local content which may exist in relation to a single neighbourhood,[93] and the different audiences for them, as well as their differing degrees of local and non-local visibility.

Finally, another entry point which proved particularly fruitful was my existing contact with a blogger from Maré, whom I had met on several previous occasions. The informal conversations I held with him at the beginning of this research project, his overview of the

[93] For an overview of the different types of internet-based local content available in a major US city, and a process of narrowing down a research focus analogous to my own, see Walker (2010).

topic of local content creation by residents based on his own experience and observations over the time he had been keeping his blog, and his blog itself also served as an entry point to my fieldwork, even if I ultimately ended up focusing on his own blog rather than on the content I encountered by following links from his blog or content he told me about.[94] As elements of a networked field site, each of the three case studies which I present in this thesis therefore had their own entry point, but there were also broader entry points to the field as a whole. Having outlined the early stages of my research and the different steps involved in constructing my field, I now turn to a more detailed discussion of the 'following the content' process and how it worked in practice.

Following the content, in practice

As I have already indicated in the section on multi-sited ethnography, in this project I developed a methodological approach which I call 'following the content'. Rather than seeking to participate in local content creation myself,[95] my mode of engagement was closer to what Kate Crawford (2009) has termed 'listening', in her reframing of 'lurking' – a more pejorative term usually associated with passive observation – in the context of social media. Whilst she does not write about listening in terms of the fieldwork roles available to social media researchers as such, Crawford's observation that listening 'invokes the more dynamic process of online attention, and suggests that it is an embedded part of networked engagement – a necessary corollary to having a "voice"' (2009: 527), fits well with the way I sought to follow and be receptive to the work of local content creators. As I have already explained, in my project, 'following the content' went hand in hand with 'systematic observation' (Androutsopoulos 2008) and 'co-presence' (Beaulieu 2010).

Technically speaking, 'following' the output of a particular website or content creator via RSS or by becoming a 'friend' or contact on a social network site allows one to be automatically informed of updates to content, and such functionality was of use to me in my own research, allowing me literally to follow particular content sites over a period of time, and to be alerted to new posts rather than having to manually check sites on a regular basis. Nonetheless, I still visited sites directly in order to view posts in situ rather than as they appear in an RSS reader, detached from their original publication site. This proved particularly important given

[94] See chapter 6 for the case study discussing this blogger's work.

[95] Some researchers investigating blogging, for instance, have engaged in blogging themselves. For example, see the work of Adolfo Estalella (Estalella & Ardèvol 2007; Beaulieu & Estalella 2011).

visual aspects of blogs (design and layout) as well as the 'framing content' in sidebars, headers and footers changed fairly frequently,[96] and I therefore decided to take regular screenshots of specific blogs as a way of capturing this.[97] As well as these more practical considerations about following, my methodology centred on the more general principle of not only following the content output of particular individuals or groups, but also, as relevant, following the links embedded or implied within content and the paths which content took beyond its original site of publication through its dissemination on other internet platforms or through practices of reposting.

Once I had established an overall focus for my fieldwork, my following was largely confined to blogs. Although my research did take into consideration the use of other social media platforms such as Twitter and Orkut by the content creators whose work I studied, I did not in fact seek to directly follow their activities on these platforms by becoming their 'friend' or 'follower' (and by extension, allowing them to follow me back). This was because I viewed these platforms as sites of a different type of content creation, at least potentially more private and personal in nature, even if they were also used in the dissemination of the blog content I was following elsewhere. Therefore, I tried to only look at personal profiles on such sites when I was specifically told about them or came across them.[98]

During fieldwork, I occasionally saw Orkut communities and forum discussions linked from blogs, implying that the public or private nature of different platforms was again, as work by Sveningsson Elm (2009) implies, a complex and contingent question, viewed differently by different people, at different moments. I also saw tweets[99] by the blogger whose work I discuss in chapter 6 being retweeted, or republished, by institutional Twitter feeds which I did follow, which brought his posts to a potentially broader audience than those he might have reached without such publicity. An additional consideration in opting not to follow the activity

[96] I discuss this mutability of blogs in more specific terms in chapters 4, 5 and 6.
[97] The downside of the screenshot tool I used (Screengrab!, an extension for the Firefox browser) was that it saved screenshots in .png format, meaning that the text within them was not searchable. The ability to take screenshots of a complete page, a selection or only the visible portion of a site meant that the tool was effective in capturing visual aspects of blogs, although I did occasionally have problems which meant that certain visual aspects of blogs did not appear in screenshots. I also sometimes took PDF copies of websites, which better captured textual data. The reference management tool Zotero can also be used to take screenshots, as I subsequently realised, although the screenshots are then saved within the user's Zotero library and can be harder to extract to other locations.
[98] For example, the writer whose work is discussed in chapter 5 sent me a link to her photographs on Orkut after I had attended the launch event for her first self-published book, and I logged in to the platform to view them (although some of the same photographs, in which I appeared, were later made available via a photograph gallery on her public blogs/websites). I received a friend request on Orkut from the profile for the group blog where the text I discuss in chapter 4 was originally published, but chose to ignore this.
[99] Tweets are posts on Twitter.

of content creators on social network sites was an attempt to protect their privacy during the research process by not leaving too many traces of our research relationship on the internet, leaving the way open for a greater potential masking of their identity in final research write-ups than has ultimately been the case. However, I recognise that although sensible precautions, such steps may have represented an attempt to establish clearer boundaries between public and private content than actually existed.

From early in the research process, then, I established my intention to be free to follow links and connections, to accompany local content as a text and as a practice as it 'circulated', not necessarily in its original or published form, between users, between websites, between locations, and between online and offline contexts. This worked well for a focus on local content which in some way incorporates references to place, and it was this openness to following connections that led to my identification of the networked nature of place and locality in the local content I worked on during my project, which in turn gave rise to the theoretical arguments presented in the first chapter of this thesis. A particular turning point came when I first encountered the text which I discuss in chapter 4. I described my early encounters with the text in my field diary, documenting my growing realisation of the multiple and shifting dimensions of the locality of a single text (at the heart of a content event), and how this might be influenced by where it was published:

> it started off (at least in my experience of the text) on a local Orkut community (before that, on an apparently non-local blog) and it was then reposted on various non-geographically local blogs but blogs which appeared to be 'local' to the author... On the same day I saw it, but before I really started following it in detail, I talked to another local resident who had seen it [also on Orkut]. (research blog, 28 August 2009)

The content event surrounding this text involved its original author and other internet users in its posting and reposting on other blogs and websites and dissemination on different internet platforms and in print, as well as engagement with the text through comments posted in the different places where it was published. As this extract from my research blog shows, I became aware of different possible trajectories within the content event, including my own. I also saw this content event as resonating with Blommaert's observation that '[t]he things we call data often come to us, rather than us going out to find them. And they come to us because of what we can call "structured accidents": coincidences that are affected by one's particular position' (2008: 29). The encounter with this text certainly proved crucial in the fieldwork and as a result I paid more attention to how particular stories, messages or announcements were published in different locations on the internet, and disseminated on different platforms. Wherever possible, I decided to follow such links and connections,

exploring the way that content travelled with or without the direct participation of its original creator.[100]

In this section of the chapter, and the one that preceded it, I explained how I began my fieldwork and how I developed my 'following the content' approach. Being able to follow specific flows of content for research purposes was also dependent on negotiating the consent of the individuals responsible for its creation, and a key element of my approach was a nuanced approach to informed consent and an ongoing effort to consult research participants about different ethical issues arising in the process of the fieldwork. I now outline how this worked in practice, before returning to the 'following the content' theme in the final section of the chapter, where I give an overview of the geographical and digital scope of my mobility in the course of following the content output of the three individuals whose work is presented in this thesis.

Informed consent and identification

Bearing in mind the issues about traceability, authorship and visibility discussed in an earlier section of this chapter, from the early stages of my research I developed and implemented a 'nuanced, contextualised' (McKee & Porter 2009: 86) approach to informed consent which was responsive and adaptive to situations which arose as the research unfolded. Consent was thus negotiated on an ongoing basis with participants at different stages in the research, from initial contact to the final stages of writing up and publishing parts of the research, and interactions on this question were not separate from the other data-gathering processes in fieldwork, but rather complemented them. This is also a process which I envisage will continue after this thesis has been submitted and examined, as I hope to go back to participants to share and follow up on my findings, and to consult them about appropriate ways of disseminating the research in Brazil.

Informed consent is a concept most commonly associated with health research, but it has increasingly been applied in social research as a result of the actions and requirements of

[100] This text, and the linked content event, also raised specific methodological and ethical issues which were less directly relevant to the other two case studies, largely because of the range of people involved in the content event around the text. These issues are therefore discussed in chapter 4, which includes a section specifically on methodological questions associated with following travelling texts.

university ethics committees.[101] While it has been suggested that 'fully informed consent is often neither possible nor desirable in ethnographic (or, for that matter, other) research' (Hammersley & Atkinson 2007: 42), I have found it a useful approach, albeit one significantly adapted and reworked into a more informal and emergent format to fit the context of my research. Although it may be that some internet content can be considered 'public' enough to study without informed consent (Hookway 2008; Wilkinson & Thelwall 2010), provided there is no interaction with its creators, this is a complex area and one in constant flux, both in terms of the range of internet content available and the different ethical approaches taken by researchers working according to different disciplinary traditions and forging new ones.

Sveningsson Elm (2009) proposes that rather than a dichotomy between public content and private content, we should think of internet content in terms of a continuum ranging from public to private, passing through semi-public and semi-private content. However, she confesses her own ongoing difficulty in taking 'a clear stance' on the issue (Sveningsson Elm 2009: 86), thereby drawing attention to the subjective dimensions of this question. As one reader of Sveningsson Elm's work observed, '[b]oth informed consent and privacy must be considered as process, not static' (Buchanan 2009: 91). If no clear judgment can be made about the public or private nature of internet content, then the potential invisibility of internet researchers when observing internet content and practices, compared to similar research in non-mediated settings, is one strong justification for making one's presence known and engaging with content creators to glean their own perspectives on the intended audience for their content as a way of then deciding how to approach such content in academic research. However, contacting content creators in this way can be problematic for, say, humanities scholars, as it may immediately reposition their research into the human subjects category, given it implies some degree of interaction (Wilkinson & Thelwall 2010: 9).

In my research, the practicalities of following the work of a particular content creator (even though this attention was concentrated on their more explicitly public content outputs, rather than all social media platforms where they had a presence) at times made this form of engagement feel a little voyeuristic. This was particularly true in early stages of the research when I had not yet written to content creators to introduce myself and my research. However, before establishing this contact, I found it necessary and useful to first go through a process of exploring whether the content site in question was relevant to my focus and whether it was

[101] As McKee and Porter (2009: 35) note, university ethics committees may be unaware of the complex ethical and methodological issues and considerations raised by internet research, although this is changing as the internet increasingly becomes a research site and tool across a variety of disciplines.

likely to be worthwhile to attempt to establish direct contact and begin to negotiate consent for the process of following their content.[102] As I have already indicated, my early, exploratory observations of content sites, largely before I had initiated contact with potential participants, helped me to narrow down my research focus and questions.

When I did make such contact, I used email (or occasionally private messaging facilities on Orkut). I provided basic information about my research project and directed my interlocutor to the blog I had set up to provide more detailed information about myself and my research. In content posted on the blog and in initial emails, I made it clear to potential participants that I would not include internet content in the research project without the knowledge and permission of its creators, that all communication between us would be confidential, and that I would consult them on how they preferred to be identified in research write-ups (reassuring them that they had the option of participating anonymously if they so wished).[103] Once content creators had agreed to participate in the research and a relationship had been established with them, I returned to these questions at different stages of the research process, reminding them at regular intervals of the ethical principles guiding my interaction with them and their content, and dealing with ethical issues that had arisen during the course of the research. For example, I checked that they were happy for me to save screenshots of the content on their blogs, and I wrote in advance of interviews asking for permission to use recording equipment. In this way, through ongoing communication and consultation, I avoided the need for a signed, written consent form, which can be an obstacle rather than an aid to social research, as scholars have noted (Rubin & Rubin 2005: 105).

Nonetheless, even the fairly informal and conversational account of research ethics and informed consent that I provided to participants, explaining the principles guiding this and the protections available to them, occasionally prompted gentle teasing or dismissiveness about its relevance. It may therefore be that, like a signed consent form, mention of confidentiality and anonymity may give an impression that potential participants might have something to hide. Nonetheless, these remain important research conventions and protections, and as noted above, they were employed in this research project as a discussion point with participants in order to try and develop an approach that best suited the research context.

[102] Garcia et al (2009: 59) review some of the different ways and orders in which researchers have approached the process of familiarisation with potential internet field sites and disclosure of their presence and observation of those sites, and the responses from participants.

[103] One early response to this statement from a potential research participant was that anonymity was not relevant because of the central role of promotion in communication activities.

As I have already mentioned, my contact with participants began on email and this proved a useful tool for getting to know each other (or renewing contact, since I knew one of the participants before beginning the research and had met him on several occasions) and arranging other meetings as the research progressed. I also made use of Google Talk or MSN for informal interactions before arranging to meet in person as well as to carry out two of my early interviews. I met participants informally in the first instance, on one or more occasions, both in Maré and in other areas of Rio, before making requests for actual interviews. In practice, the pattern of interaction varied somewhat between participants. After initial contact by email, around six weeks after the text I discuss in chapter 4 was originally published, I interviewed its author via internet chat around another six weeks after that. We then met in person around a month later, at a bar near his workplace, and after another six weeks, we arranged a follow-up interview. My first face-to-face meeting with the writer whose work I discuss in chapter 5 came when I met her in Maré to collect a copy of a book, containing one of her short stories, which I had reserved by email and paid for by bank deposit. We stood talking in the street, outside the gate of a local NGO premises, before walking a short distance to a small shopping centre, where we continued our conversation over a cold drink. Although we were in touch via the internet we did not meet again in person until just under three months later. I attended the launch event for her first solo book, at a cultural centre and library in a northern Rio suburb, along with her family and some friends.[104] Not long after that, I emailed and asked if we could arrange an interview, but this did not actually take place for another two months.

In the case of the blogger whose work is the focus of chapter 6, I met him informally at his workplace on two occasions quite early in my research, once spontaneously and once for a pre-arranged meeting when we sat in front of a computer looking at blogs and Orkut communities that might be relevant to my research. I did not interview him until around ten months later, although I occasionally bumped into him during that time. In this way, my interaction with the three content creators whose work I write about in this thesis was spread out over the period of my fieldwork and was maintained using different communication channels as well as face-to-face meetings. It was also not always easy to find a suitable

[104] This event provided me with insights into the general challenges facing emerging cultural producers in suburban Rio. For example, I learned that the library and cultural centre where the launch event was held was one of only a few venues available locally for such purposes.

place to talk, and this is reflected in the choice of interview venues[105] and the importance of NGO premises as a meeting point. Also, all three of the content creators had busy schedules, and it therefore usually took some time, with occasional rescheduling, before we successfully managed to arrange to meet in person.

After the in-depth interview with each participant, I produced a transcript which I sent to them by email for their review. I checked that they were happy with the content of the interview and asked if there were any areas they wished to remove, comment or add to, before I began the analysis. I explained that I wanted to be able to cite from the interview material in research write-ups. I also sent any follow-up questions that had arisen since the interview. As a security precaution, I sent transcripts in a password-protected attachment, and emailed the password separately to participants. The approach taken in the ensuing review process varied from participant to participant, and responded to their individual preferences and concerns. In one case, I secured consent for the inclusion or citation of specific passages from the interview transcript, rather than for the transcript as a whole. In another case, I sent a list of blog posts (and specific extracts from them) which I hoped to cite to the participant in question, for agreement and comment. I also responded to a participant's request to omit specific details from research write-ups. I focused my citations on blog content, for which I directly and explicitly sought consent from their authors, and only rarely cited from email or Orkut communication, again requesting explicit consent where this was the case. I also told participants I would not include images from their content or blogs, including screenshots, without their express permission.

Like Hine (2007: n.p.), who asked participants in a discussion list she was studying for their permission to quote material from the list archives, and gained relevant insights as a result, I found that '[t]he ethical commitment [...] began as a duty and turned into an interesting and useful engagement'. The data review process[106] I initiated was fairly time-consuming, and probably therefore fairly onerous for participants, requiring them to remain engaged and

[105] Two of the in-depth, semi-structured interviews I conducted took place in participants' workplaces, and one in a participant's home.

[106] Other researchers report on their own review processes with participants. Eichhorn (2001: 576) gave each participant in her study a copy of the extracts from their zines and from her correspondence with them which she planned to include in her thesis and resulting publications, and offered them the option of editing these if they wished. Gay (2005) read over interview transcripts with the protagonist of his study. Barton and Hamilton (1998: 66) undertook a much more involved process, which they called the 'collaborative ethnography stage', in which they shared interview extracts and their own analysis with each participant and sought their input. McKee and Porter (2009: 15) note a broader trend towards increased 'checking and developing' of research findings by researchers with research participants.

committed to the research process for a longer period than might otherwise have been the case, and to read through extensive written material. Although email reminders were sometimes required to keep the process moving, all three participants did complete the review of their material. I therefore consider this ongoing contact with them to have been a positive element of the project, and they have also indicated to me that they valued being consulted and kept informed in this way.

The question of how best to identify participants in research write-ups was raised as part of the interviews themselves, and I later returned to this issue in email communication with participants in the writing up phase, outlining how my thinking on the topic was developing, and consulting them about their preferences based on the approach I had decided to take to data (citing internet content and interview material in in-depth case studies). I explained issues such as the fact that the inclusion of verbatim quotes from internet content meant in theory that should readers of my work wish to locate the original source, they would be able to do so with the help of a search engine.

All three participants had originally told me they were happy for their real name to be included in the research, and for the name of the favela where they live to be supplied, but this continued to cause me some unease due to the media environment in Rio de Janeiro which can often be hostile and biased against favela residents, as I discuss in the following chapter. In addition, as scholars have pointed out, the growth in access to digital technologies and the ease of internet publishing means that research results are now, potentially at least, more accessible to a non-academic audience, both to original research participants and to journalists, government agents, and others who might have an interest (Hammersley & Atkinson 2007: 221; McKee & Porter 2009: 51). This increasing openness and accessibility of academic research is usually seen as a positive development, but combined with the increasingly traceable data arising from internet research, it requires academics to be particularly sensitive to the privacy of research participants when making decisions about what to include in research write-ups.

In response to my later email about using pseudonyms or truncated versions of names, the content creators who participated in my research all effectively told me that it was up to me to make the final decision on how to identify them. In the end, as I mentioned earlier in the chapter, I have opted to use first initials rather than pseudonyms or real names. This has been my own 'situated compromise' (Hine 2000: 24) as I sought to find a solution that

addressed all of the different issues raised by the focus of my own research, from the traceability of internet content, the need for some kind of attribution of and credit for authorship, the affirmation and visibility of marginalised places and subjects, and the social, cultural and political considerations relating to the treatment and representation of favelas and their residents in Brazilian media and society. I believe that in many ways, there are parallels between my own ethical decision-making and that of the content creators as they decide what kind of internet content to post about themselves and their neighbourhood, and the unpredictability of the audiences and the reach of such content once it has been made publicly available. All of them consciously negotiate the risks and opportunities associated with this content creation on the internet, as my empirical chapters reveal, although they largely do so under a variant of their own names. However, in the case of my research project, I am not engaged in such decision-making solely about the visibility of my own work, but rather am concerned with the visibility of work which in turn makes visible the work of others in a completely different context and language (that of academic work written in English),[107] who will not have the opportunity to participate in all aspects of my ongoing decision-making about where to make the work in question available (as far as I myself can control this, in any case) and who may not be aware of all of the potential consequences of participating in a research project such as my own.

In this thesis, therefore, I have preserved the visibility of the local content I have studied, and of the place it represents,[108] whilst seeking to protect, to a small degree, the visibility (and therefore the privacy) of the individuals responsible for the content. Although they are self-consciously involved in the generation and sharing of content which is at least in part intended for an external audience beyond the area where they live or their existing social networks, and attempt to negotiate some of the risks (and opportunities) that this may bring, they are not well-known public figures, and I believe that this justifies some precautions in how I identify them. A book published in Brazil which presents interviews with leaders from four different favelas explicitly notes that they are named because they are 'public

[107] It is possible, given my ongoing links to Brazil and the fact that my research is about Brazil, that I might in the future publish or present my work in Portuguese. This would raise ethical issues of its own, given that writing in English, rather than Portuguese, at least offers some small degree of distancing from the context of the research – a distancing with both potentially positive and negative implications, as the discussion in the body of the text implies.

[108] It is worth pointing out that some anthropologists have used the real name of the favela where they conducted fieldwork (for example, Marcos Alvito who worked in Acari, and Alba Zaluar who worked in Cidade de Deus), but where the focus of research has been explicitly on sensitive topics associated with violence, a pseudonym is often used (for example, Penglase 2011) or alternatively the names of places are simply omitted (see Machado da Silva 2008).

personalities who circulate widely and whose voices are recognised',[109] and that this 'attributes the appropriate importance to what they had to tell us'[110] (Pandolfi & Grynszpan 2003: 29). Reflecting the work on ethnographic and anthropological approaches to texts discussed earlier in the chapter, I hope that direct citation from content, rather than its suppression (Barber 2007), is one way to attribute the due importance to the local content analysed in this study, and I also hope that identifying its authors only by their first initial does not in any way detract from this. However, I am aware this risk exists.

As well as internet content, my thesis also draws on material from interviews, in other words material not currently in the public domain, although I have explicitly sought informed consent for citations from it, as noted above. However, it is the connection made between this interview material and traceable internet content that has contributed to my ongoing caution about how to identify research participants. Researchers have noted that the publication of internet content in research reports may disturb the relative anonymity of the internet, where a single post may not stand out, by 'potentially *bring[ing]* a readership to a forum which otherwise might not have that readership' (McKee & Porter 2009: 106-107; emphasis in original). This could in turn 'bring attention to [...] bloggers by those who would not normally know about them and thus possibly create a conflict where none had existed prior to the reporting of the research in print or at conferences' (Banks & Eble 2007: 37), and this has been an ongoing concern of mine throughout the research process, which I have sought to mitigate in the decisions I have made on how to present the material collected during fieldwork and how to identify content creators. In the final section of this chapter, I return to a broader discussion of my fieldwork and how the act of 'following the content' led me to many different sites of content creation on the internet, as well as to different parts of the city of Rio and, in my imagination, to locations beyond these, which I did not visit in person.

Where my fieldwork took me: The contours of my networked field site

As I have already explained, I did not have to go (only) to Maré to find my field. I found it (principally) on the internet and in local content as published and disseminated across different websites and platforms, content that then took me closer to areas of the favela and aspects of favela life that I did not experience for myself. Interviews with content creators

[109] *'personalidades públicas com grande circulação e palavra reconhecida'*
[110] *'atribuindo-lhes a importância devida pelo que tinham a nos dizer'*

also fulfilled the same purpose. But I also found my field (or followed my field) in other areas of the city of Rio, for example when I attended a launch of a book by a Maré resident in a suburb of northern Rio, or when I attended a screening of a film about Maré followed by a discussion panel involving local residents in downtown Rio, and other places or events where I heard mention of the neighbourhood. I also found it in the local newspapers and on the websites of mainstream media organisations, and I sometimes saw the same stories covered in content published by residents,[111] or heard participants discuss them in interviews. My field also stretched in my imagination to the north-east of Brazil, to the home village of the blogger discussed in chapter 6, as we sat in Maré looking at press coverage of a local land dispute there, which he had posted on the blog he set up for that village. I also encountered the village as he talked about its newly opened telecentre during his interview, when he mentioned the village's local content blog in emails, and as I browsed photographs and videos he posted on YouTube and his blog after a trip home. On the same laptop open in front of us in Maré, we also looked at photographs taken in a rural part of south-eastern Brazil, posted on a blog he had created as part of a regional workshop for local communicators. Just as I travelled to other parts of the city to follow relevant people and content and construct my field, I found myself 'travelling' virtually to other parts of the country through his content. I also had the feeling of going back in time when I watched the historical videos of Maré that he had digitised and made available, again on YouTube and his blog.

My field also came to me when I was not necessarily expecting it, via the automated feeds and means of following that I set up, but also via unexpected sources, via email discussion lists and Twitter feeds I already subscribed to, and did not necessarily associate directly with my fieldwork. In this way, I occasionally heard about the people whose work I was following through unexpected channels, giving me further insights into their public activities and the extent to which these activities and their work or content was being disseminated. However, there were often lulls in content flows, and I regularly had the feeling that I was 'doing fieldwork', whilst sitting at my computer checking feeds and sites and 'waiting for something to happen', waiting for someone to publish some relevant content. At these times, I asked myself what it was that made someone decide to publish content at a particular moment. Given that the flows of content from particular sites were often not substantial, intense or predictable, it therefore proved productive to focus on connections between content, as well

[111] This is particularly true of the conflict which was the inspiration for the text discussed in chapter 4, but also happened on other occasions.

as taking an in-depth look at the content itself, combining attention to practices and to texts (as well as images and videos).

In this way, my dual strategy proved fruitful: by following the content produced by specific local content creators, I was also following their practices. Establishing mobility as a key principle of the fieldwork from the outset, despite my focus on place, was a response to the connective nature of the internet, and enabled me to develop insights about the translocality of local content and to be attentive to the way local content, and the practices of local content creators, traversed and occupied different internet platforms and communication channels, both online and offline. This realisation might have escaped me had I chosen to site my fieldwork more exclusively in a particular physical location. Nonetheless, as I have shown in this chapter, geographical place was also a key orienting factor in the fieldwork, and it was in the process of following and analysing specific local content texts and practices, originating in a single geographical location, that I developed an awareness of how territorial embeddedness can coexist with a networked understanding of place and locality.

Conclusion

As this chapter has shown, the foregrounding of methodological and ethical issues in the project has been both challenging and ultimately productive and creative. The field site I constructed was partial and sometimes fragmented, and not complete or holistic in any way, recalling observations made by Hine (2000).[112] I focused my study on particular people and particular blogs, rather than trying to encompass even the majority of the blogs, sites and content creators from one neighbourhood which I discovered via my mapping and following process which was a key element in the process of constructing my own networked field site. As I have shown in this chapter, my approach has been influenced by multi-sited ethnographies and ethnographic studies of the local dimensions of the internet. In seeking to combine attention to internet practices and internet content, I have also drawn on ethnographic and anthropological approaches to text and writing, including work in new literacy studies. It is that interdisciplinary field of research which provided me with the inspiration for the concept of the 'content event' which I use to refer to specific content-related episodes involving different 'communicative ecologies'. I have also explored in detail

[112] Nonetheless, although I did not explicitly look for them or focus on them in my analysis, I did eventually find small connections between the three content creators whose work I consider in the case study chapters, via the content itself.

the ethical aspects of my fieldwork, presenting the main challenges associated with the traceability of internet data and the solutions I adopted in response to these issues, through my nuanced approach to informed consent and the citation of content without providing the full names of its creators. As I have indicated, some of the ethical considerations in this project were specifically associated with my focus on internet content creation by residents of a favela in Rio de Janeiro seeking greater visibility for themselves and their neighbourhood beyond the stereotypical associations of these places with crime and violence. It is this empirical context for the research which is the focus of the next chapter.

Chapter 3: Favelas and their representation: From outsider stereotypes to new visibilities and user-generated content

Introduction

The preceding chapters have focused on theory and methodology, and in both cases connections were made where relevant to features of the empirical context in which the research took place: a Brazilian favela and its representation on the internet by its residents. This context will now be addressed directly and in order to cover its different aspects, the chapter is divided into two parts. The first part looks at how favelas have been defined, understood and represented by outsiders, in particular by researchers, policymakers and the media in Brazil. Particular attention is paid to the media because its portrayal of favelas, and particularly its prevailing emphasis on violence and crime, is an important reference which NGO projects and favela residents attempt to work against in their own content. Aside from prioritising violence, external representations tend to homogenise favelas, to emphasise poverty as a defining characteristic of these areas, and to position them as outside the official city. However, as the chapter shows, in recent years residents of favelas and other urban periphery neighbourhoods in Brazil have increasingly become involved in generating and sharing their own representations of the areas where they live, and attracting greater visibility for these, through projects set up for this purpose as well as independent cultural production in areas such as film, literature, and music.

The internet and digital technologies more broadly speaking have been important in this process, and are therefore the focus of the second part of the chapter. There, I provide an overview of internet use and digital culture in Brazil, with particular emphasis on their manifestations in favelas and other urban periphery areas. I discuss the growth in internet access in Brazil in recent years and the different factors behind this, including government policy and market and economic opportunities. I look then look specifically at the existing, albeit slightly dated and piecemeal, data that exists about internet access in Rio's favelas and draw on other information which indirectly helps to build up a picture of the situation today. I focus particularly on *lan houses* given their importance for digital culture in favelas and urban periphery areas but also present figures relating to increasing home ownership of computers by Brazil's emerging lower middle class, or *classe C*. Finally, I provide an overview of statistics and research about the enthusiastic use and appropriation of web 2.0 platforms by Brazilian internet users, focusing particularly on the social network site Orkut

and blogs, and relate this to local content creation. The chapter concludes with a brief introduction to Complexo da Maré, home of the content creators whose work is discussed in the empirical chapters that follow this one.

The aim in this contextual chapter is not to provide a comprehensive review of the literature on all aspects of favelas or internet use in Brazil, but rather to highlight aspects relevant to my project and the intersections between the topics in order to give an overview of the current situation in Brazil and, principally, to locate my own research in a broader context. I call for a nuanced assessment of the effects and implications of digital culture, suggesting that access to the internet by favela residents has challenged some hierarchies, but by no means removed them. The chapter also shows how my own research, into more public and visible representations of favelas published largely on blogs, complements existing studies of internet use by residents of urban peripheries in Brazil which have tended to focus primarily on projects (both those providing internet access and those engaged in producing content), *lan houses*, and use of Orkut. To establish the background for this discussion, the chapter begins by considering the different ways favelas have been defined and understood by different actors, and the implications for their representation.

Defining favelas

Favelas are both places and spaces (Perlman 2010: xiii). In other words, they are both specific physical locations and conceptual spaces, with a symbolic meaning in the popular imagination and territoriality of the city of Rio de Janeiro. As physical locations, they tend to be defined by what they are not, and by what they lack, in relation to other spaces of the city (Souza e Silva et al 2009: 16).[113] In addition, there are discrepancies in the precise definitions of what constitutes a favela, leading to, for example, varying figures for the number of favelas in the city of Rio de Janeiro.[114] As Martijn Oosterbaan (2009: 97-98 n.1) has pointed out, choosing how to define favelas is an inherently political enterprise, and one that 'point[s] to different positions that people and organizations take in the struggle over meaning and power both inside and outside the favela'. Highly stigmatised and fetishised at

[113] See Souza e Silva et al (2009: 22-23) for a 12-point definition of favelas, which is prefaced by the affirmation that '*a favela é um território constituinte da cidade*' ['the favela is a constituent territory of the city'].
[114] The *Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística* (IBGE), a federal body linked to the Ministry of Planning, identified 518 favelas in its 2000 census, while the Instituto Pereira Passos, linked to the municipal administration, mapped 752 in the same period. Cross-checking of the two lists produced a common tally of 453 favelas (Observatório de Favelas 2007a: 27-28).

the same time, favelas are a powerful and evocative reference both domestically and nationally in Rio de Janeiro and Brazil, and abroad – for academics, for the media, for tourists, for policymakers and funders, for cultural producers and for ordinary people. Their representation is fraught with complexity and with stereotypes, and often reflects emotions falling somewhere between fascination and fear, depending on one's perspective, as this sobering statement from a long-time observer of favelas makes clear:

> To say that the word 'favela' and its connotations are 'problematic' would be a gross understatement. Every issue relating to favelas is fraught with projections, contradictions, and misunderstanding. However they are seen by outsiders, the favelas of Rio remain stigmatized places of fear within a city struggling to redefine its economy and identity, within a highly unequal country not yet able to provide equal protection under the rule of law. (Perlman 2010: 333)

Over the past forty years favelas have been among the most studied squatter settlements in the world (McCann 2006: 149), although this research has tended to be rather 'lopsided' (McCann 2006: 150) with certain favelas attracting large numbers of researchers and others not being studied at all. Also, despite the growing volume of studies about favelas, it has been rare for them to present 'the voices of the favelas themselves',[115] as the editors of a collection of oral history interviews with favela leaders observed (Pandolfi & Grynszpan 2003: 29). In fact, Licia do Prado Valladares (2005) has argued that academic work on favelas has tended to follow three dogmas. She finds that researchers have approached favelas firstly as highly specific and distinctive spaces, with a 'strong identity', 'a geography of their own' and a 'code of illegality' in land occupation;[116] secondly, as the territory of urban poverty par excellence; and thirdly, that they have viewed favelas as a single, homogenous category, rather than focusing on their internal and external diversity (Valladares 2005: 150-152).

To counter these dogmas, Valladares (2005: 153-157) presents a brief sketch of contemporary Rocinha[117] in the concluding chapter of her book to illustrate that favelas today are actually highly diversified spaces, both internally and in relation to each other, with intense local commerce and a dynamic housing market. Bryan McCann (2006: 161) reminds us that favelas also have 'their own "middle-class" of entrepreneurs, property holders, civil servants, and NGO agents'.[118] Regardless of this, Valladares suggests that policymakers,

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115 *'as próprias vozes das favelas'*

116 *'forte identidade', 'uma geografia própria', 'estatuto de ilegalidade'*

117 Rocinha is one of the largest favelas in Rio de Janeiro, located on the border between the city's southern and western zones.

118 Indeed, as Souza e Silva and Barbosa (2005: 59 n.3) point out, the concept of 'middle class' is highly imprecise in Rio. As well as income, place of residence can be an important informal determinant of social class in Rio, and at the same time, as I outline in the second half of the chapter, research has shown that a significant number of favela residents can be considered lower middle class and middle class according to the Brazilian

residents' associations and NGOs, as well as researchers themselves, all have something to gain from the persistence of the dogmas about the singularity, poverty and homogeneity of favelas – although to be fair, an increasing number of authors do point to the diversity favelas encompass in terms of topography, demographic and socioeconomic characteristics, services, housing, levels of violence and the presence of the state (see for example Perlman 2004; McCann 2006; Souza e Silva et al 2009). Indeed, it has been argued that 'the term favela encompasses such an urban variety that it no longer has a single meaning' (Jaguaribe & Hetherington 2004: 159). Nonetheless, perhaps precisely because of the tendency towards the homogenisation of favelas, there are some common features in how favelas and their residents are represented which are particularly relevant to a discussion of local content produced by favela residents. These stem from the ways in which the territoriality of favelas is conventionally understood and portrayed in Rio, whether in the media, in state policy or in everyday social interactions.

Territory, place and space in Rio's favelas

As noted in the thesis introduction, favelas are home to around 19% of the population of Rio de Janeiro. In spite of this, favelas are often viewed as not being part of the city – they are regarded as a problem impinging on the city proper, and a formation 'opposed to a specific urban ideal, which is lived by only a small portion of the city's inhabitants' (Souza e Silva & Barbosa 2005: 57).[119] In a recent book reporting and reflecting on four decades of research in Rio's favelas, Janice Perlman (2010: 30) suggested that '[p]erhaps the single persistent distinction between favelas and the rest of the city is the deeply rooted stigma that adheres to them and to those who reside in them'. Whether this stigma is territorial or based on other factors is a complex matter, on which scholars do not always agree. McCann (2006: 162), for example, has suggested that it is the 'territorial marginality' of favelas which underpins the ongoing challenges facing these areas and their residents, and as a consequence, the governance of the city of Rio as a whole. Many favelas are characterised by the presence of non-state armed groups, whether drug traffickers or militia (armed paramilitary groups), who are seen to regulate access to their territory and much of what takes place there. McCann (2006: 159) therefore argues that 'the problem of gangs in Rio's favelas is primarily one of territorial control and only secondarily one of drug trafficking itself'. Other researchers

system of socioeconomic classification. Where I use the term 'middle class' in this thesis I am therefore referring primarily to residents of neighbourhoods other than favelas.

[119] '*Contraposta a um determinado ideal de urbano, vivenciado por uma pequena parcela dos habitantes da cidade*'

(Machado da Silva 2008: 13) have debated the so-called 'territorial confinement'[120] experienced by favela residents, which is understood as the result of contiguity with the drug gangs, the violence suffered at the hands of the police and militias and the distrust of residents of other parts of the city. The Rio de Janeiro state government is currently attempting to regain territorial control of some favelas through its favela pacification scheme, known by the acronym UPP (*Unidade de Polícia Pacificadora*).[121]

However, the marginality of favela residents themselves has been contested by Perlman, who has conducted research specifically on this topic – as noted above, rather than territorial *marginality*, she focuses on the territorial *stigmatisation* of favelas and by extension, that of their residents. Reflecting on her original findings on marginality and favelas, forty years on,[122] she writes:

> My conclusion was that the favela residents are not marginal at all but inextricably bound into society, albeit in a manner detrimental to their own interests. They contribute their hard work, their high hopes, and their loyalties, but do not benefit from the goods and services of the system. Although they are neither economically nor politically marginal, they are exploited, manipulated, and repressed; although they are neither socially nor culturally marginal, they are stigmatized and excluded from a closed class system. To my disappointment, but not my surprise, this continues to be the case today. (Perlman 2010: 150)

A more nuanced view of favelas, going beyond the idea of territorial marginality discussed above, might therefore be that they are characterised by a 'complex interplay of segregation and connection' (Hamburger 2004: 115),[123] but even here it is important not to fall into the trap of generalisation. Although the idea of Rio de Janeiro as a 'divided city',[124] between the *morro* (or hillside, where many – but by no means all – favelas are located)[125] and the *asfalto* (or asphalt, the perceived home of the middle and upper classes) has been very influential, Beatriz Jaguaribe and Kevin Hetherington (2004: 159) argue that 'numerous exchanges' take place between these apparently separate areas of the city, and that 'it is the ambiguity of these indistinct contact zones that allows violence and socialization to occur simultaneously'.

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[120] '*confinamento territorial*'

[121] According to the English version of the *UPP Repórter* website (UPP n.d.: n.p), Pacifier Police Units are 'a new model of Public Security and policing that intends to bring police and population closer together, as well as to strengthen social policies inside communities. By reestablishing control over areas that for decades were occupied by traffic and, recently, also by militias, the UPPs bring peace to communities'. The UPP approach, which began in late 2008, has been critiqued by favela leaders and academics for its top-down nature, its lack of dialogue with civil society and the uncertainty about its widespread and coherent implementation and sustainability (Ibase 2011).

[122] Perlman is the author of a famous study entitled *The Myth of Marginality*, originally published in 1976.

[123] This comment was based on research in a São Paulo favela, but I find it also works well as a way of thinking about Rio favelas.

[124] *Cidade Partida* was the title of a book by journalist Zuenir Ventura published in 1994.

[125] For example, Maré itself is located on largely flat terrain.

This more connective view of favelas as place, focusing on their extroverted rather than their introverted nature, recalls the work of Doreen Massey which was discussed in chapter 1.

Nevertheless, a territorial stigma does certainly exist in relation to favelas, and arises from an understanding (by non-residents) of these areas as predominantly territories of violence and crime, which is then transferred to residents of the places and spaces concerned. By implication, people living in favelas are therefore understood to be inextricably connected to, and involved in, the criminal activities that take place there (Machado da Silva 2008: 14).[126] This criminalisation is a common theme of media representations of favela residents, despite the fact that only a tiny proportion of them are actually involved in crime.[127] Regardless of the fallacy that underpins it, the association between territory and stigma is well established in Rio de Janeiro. As Cecchetto and Farias explain:

> the connection which is made between violence and certain territories of the city has occupied a central place in the carioca imaginary, whether in reinforcing stereotypes and fear of the residents of these areas, or in filling the political agenda of the main candidates for office at election time. (2009: 228)[128]

In this way, the authors suggest that one's place of residence operates as 'a powerful means of classification, which creates hierarchies, classifies and separates bodies' (Cecchetto & Farias 2009: 228)[129] in Rio de Janeiro. As I discuss in a later section of this chapter, one response to this stigma has been a movement towards the 'affirmation' of favela territories in projects and cultural production (Ramos 2007).

Another important dimension of the territoriality of favelas and how this is understood and represented by residents is the existence of many subdivisions which may be invisible to outsiders, who tend to think of favelas as unified and bounded spaces (Oosterbaan 2009: 93). Whilst Perlman (2010: 53; emphasis in original) points out that in some cases, favelas 'have merged with one another [...] into vast, continuous agglomerations or *complexos*, each composed of multiple favela communities', Brazilian scholars have equally emphasised the

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[126] These easy associations overlook the fact that the drugs trade and associated activities are part of extensive transnational networks extending well beyond the favelas, beginning with people in other areas of the city of Rio.

[127] As an illustration of the inaccuracy of such representations, Jailson de Souza e Silva (2007: 94) has pointed out that the number of Maré residents with a university degree (1.64% of the Maré population in 2000) is much larger than the number of local residents involved in drug trafficking, yet 87% of the media reports about the area focus on violence and criminality. Souza e Silva (2007: 96) also argues that media estimates of the proportion of favela residents involved in crime (he cites journalists who claimed between 10% and 30%) were absurd, and resulted in utterly impossible numbers when these percentages were applied to the overall population of specific favelas, or favelas collectively.

[128] *'a interligação entre a violência e determinados territórios da cidade tem ocupado lugar central no imaginário carioca, seja no reforço do estereótipo e medo dos moradores dessas áreas, seja para preencher as agendas políticas dos principais candidatos a governantes nos tempos de eleição'*

[129] *'um poderoso operador classificatório, que hierarquiza, classifica e separa os corpos'*

importance for favela residents of territorial divisions operating at the micro level. Reinforcing the point made earlier in this chapter about the inherent diversity of favelas, Marcos Alvito (2001: 71) stresses that the significance of micro-areas and their role in identity formation varies from favela to favela. However, Alba Zaluar's more general point on the importance of different contexts of locality in favelas is instructive when thinking about how these areas are portrayed in content by their residents:

> The representation of locality is one of the most important in the ideology of the poor urban [subject] in this city. And this locality has territorial divisions and sub-divisions, and the more there are of these, the more there have to be organizations that unite, mobilize and create the identity of the local people. (1985: 175 cited in and translated by Oosterbaan 2009: 93)

In my own work, I do not look at the role of organisations, mentioned by Zaluar, but rather at how favela residents' own representations of locality are now, in some cases, available via content published on the internet. Recalling my discussion in chapter 1, inspired by the ideas of Appadurai, of the plural ecology of locality which different people produce in content, Oosterbaan (2009: 94; emphasis in original) has observed that in the Rio favela where he did his doctoral research, people 'could easily identify themselves with certain local and supra-local identities simultaneously, for example, when they identified themselves as *morador* (inhabitant) and carioca'.[130] The internet content I examine in this thesis reveals the full complexity of these multiple and overlapping localities and identities, as its creators variously affirm and represent the overall favela complex where they live (Complexo da Maré), particular sub-areas within it, their status as *cariocas*, and in one case, migrant origins in the north-east of Brazil. At the same time as they focus on and name Maré as a specific and distinct location, they also make clear that it and they have things in common with other favelas and urban periphery neighbourhoods (including suburbs) and their residents,[131] and that it and they are part of the city of Rio, rather than separate from it.

As well as limiting social contact and exchange between inhabitants of disparate neighbourhoods in Rio, the territorial stigma associated specifically with favelas also has implications for state policy towards favelas, and particularly public security policy, as well as what is considered acceptable by public opinion in this respect. According to Peralva (2000

[130] The term '*carioca*' refers to residents of Rio de Janeiro.
[131] In Rio de Janeiro a suburb is generally understood as an area lying to the north (and west) of the city centre, on the commuter train line, in which most residents are from lower social classes. As Perlman (2010: 236) explains, *subúrbio* is a 'term used for low-income areas on the urban fringe'. Suburbs are considered to be poorly served by public services and increasingly associated with insecurity and danger, in contrast to their previous image (up to the 1970s) as sleepy urban areas (Cecchetto & Farias 2009, drawing on Soares & Bernardes 1995). There are many favelas in the suburban area of the city. However, it is worth pointing out that if suburbs, like favelas, are becoming stigmatised, they are also a site of cultural production and identity.

cited in Carvalho Lopes 2009: 379), since 1980 favelas have been seen by the middle classes as the opposite of the city, as an enemy territory where any form of state violence is legitimate.[132] The mainstream media have also played a key role in perpetuating this view and reinforcing the city's spatial divides (Leu 2004: 352). In fact, media practices relating to favelas can be approached in the context of a broader discussion of favela representation and the centrality of violence in dominant narratives.

In chapter 1, I mentioned briefly the suggestion made by a leading Brazilian scholar and cultural critic, Beatriz Jaguaribe (2009: 200), that the city of Rio, its favelas and Brazil's 'national imagined community' as a whole are currently facing a 'crisis of representation'. She ascribes this crisis to 'increases in social violence produced by the globalized drug trade and in the flow of media images, consumer goods and new cultural identities' (Jaguaribe 2009: 200). In the following sections, I will use Jaguaribe's idea of a representational crisis to frame my discussion of media coverage of favelas before providing an overview of how favela residents have become increasingly involved in generating and disseminating their own representations, with the help of digital technologies. As I show here and in my empirical chapters, mainstream representations of favelas, and particularly their prevailing emphasis on violence, remain an important reference which projects and individual content creators attempt to work against in their own content.

Trends in media representation of favelas

The media in Rio de Janeiro, and Brazil as a whole,[133] has often employed what Lorraine Leu (2004: 351) terms a 'trope of war' in its coverage of favela-related stories, a discourse which privileges the dramatic and spectacular, and 'suppresses complexity and stymies debate by encouraging a Manichean "us" and "them" attitude'. It also gives differential, sometimes preferential, treatment to violence affecting residents of middle-class neighbourhoods, compared to how it approaches violence suffered by residents of favelas or other periphery neighbourhoods (Souza e Silva & Barbosa 2005: 58; Souza e Silva 2007: 96). The media

[132] Amnesty International (2005: para.3; emphasis in original) notes that 'when the police do intervene [in favelas], it is often by mounting "invasions" – violent mass raids using no warrants or, on rare occasions, collective warrants [...] that label the entire community as criminal. Human rights violations and corruption on the part of the police are rife in the *favelas*. The majority of the victims of police violence are poor, black or mixed race youths and the experience of many *favela* residents is that the police are corrupt, brutal and to be feared'.

[133] Brazilian newspapers tend to be regionally focused, even when they have a national distribution. The main Rio papers are *O Globo*, *O Dia*, *Extra*, *Meia Hora*, and *Jornal do Brasil* (since 2010, the latter is available only on the internet). The main São Paulo papers, *Folha de São Paulo* and *O Estado de São Paulo* (often known by the shorter name *Estadão*), also carry national coverage.

and journalists are therefore another group that Valladares (2005: 158) suggests may benefit from the persistence of certain dogmas about favelas. In its overwhelming focus on violence when covering favelas, Brazilian media coverage largely neglects other dimensions of everyday life in those neighbourhoods, such as culture, sport and the economy (Ramos & Paiva 2007: 77). Even when the Brazilian media does venture into coverage beyond the remit of crime reporters, it tends to perpetuate pre-existing stereotypes about favelas rather than trying to present more representative coverage of everyday life in these areas and acknowledging their diversity.[134] It has been suggested that this skewed focus may also be the result of a long-standing, although recently abolished, requirement for journalists in the country to hold a university diploma in journalism,[135] which has meant that professionals working in this area tend to be from the middle classes, with very little personal experience of everyday life in favelas and periphery areas (Ramos & Paiva 2007: 78-79). There is potential for this to change as more favela residents attend university, and as citizen journalism initiatives expand, including on the internet.

Beyond the recurrent focus on conflict, there has recently been a media controversy over the representation of favelas on Google Maps, with protests led by the *O Globo* newspaper (see Antunes 2011a, 2011b; BBC News 2011). In considering the significance of this episode it is worth remembering that favelas have often not been included on maps of Rio at all, and where they have appeared, 'they are usually coded in an uncertain or less committed strategy of representation' (Fabricius 2008: 1). Their appearance on Google Maps, on equal terms with other neighbourhoods, is therefore important, but the recent conflict surrounding this matter helps to illustrate how fraught the question of favela representation can be. It also highlights the new possibilities and challenges offered by internet platforms, and the different interests involved in this debate, such as tourism. The latter are heightened as the Rio authorities prepare for the 2014 World Cup and the 2016 Olympic Games. An alternative citizen-based approach to mapping favelas has also been seen in recent years in the form of youth projects which have got underway in Rio using web 2.0 platforms, set up with the dual goal of increasing the visibility of the territory of the favelas and the businesses and cultural facilities which operate there, and filling in the gaps which often exist in relation to such areas

[134] As Cruz (2007: 78 n.3) notes, there are of course exceptions to this trend and journalists who try to produce non-stigmatising coverage of favelas.
[135] This requirement was established in the 1970s and overturned in 2009, but continues to be the subject of intense debate.

in official maps (Aisengart Santos & Azevedo 2010).[136] However, as I have already stressed above, it is violence and crime, rather than attention to commercial and cultural vibrancy, which tends to attract the attention of outsiders when they portray favelas.

Violence, its pitfalls and effects on representation

Violence in Rio can be understood 'not only as an empirical phenomenon, but as a widely-shared cultural representation' (Penglase 2011: 413).[137] It is an undeniable and unavoidable fact of life, but it is also a cultural construction that exponentially increases levels of fear and anxiety among different social groups and divisions between them. One of the factors affecting media coverage of favelas is that since the 2002 torture and murder of a *Globo* journalist called Tim Lopes by drug traffickers in the Alemão favela, after he used a hidden camera to try to record footage of a *baile funk*,[138] Rio-based journalists have entered favelas fairly rarely, and only under specific circumstances or using special safety equipment (Ramos & Paiva 2007: 99-112). In addition, many favela residents can be largely unwilling to speak to the media on topics relating to violence as this can be seen as a contravention of the 'law of silence' ('*lei do silêncio*') imposed by drug traffickers. Favela residents may also be wary of denouncing police violence or violations of human rights, fearing possible reprisals by the police. Whilst these restrictions on the voice of favela residents may themselves be part of the stereotypes which outsiders cultivate about them, and may also constitute a generalisation which negates diverse positions and attitudes as well as varying situations in different favelas, the fear, where it exists, is often very real, as are the possible repercussions. Nonetheless, as Luiz Antonio Machado da Silva (2008: 25) has argued, the public silence of favela residents on the topic of drug traffickers (criticism tends to be made only in secret or to trusted interlocutors), or their avoidance of this issue, should not be interpreted as passivity or lack of interest.

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[136] One example is the Wikimapa project, launched in 2009. In its first phase, four young women from different Rio favelas (Complexo do Alemão, Cidade de Deus, Complexo da Maré and Santa Marta) mapped businesses, facilities and streets in their local areas using internet-enabled camera phones. Participants also contributed diary-style posts to a group blog. The project gained significant national and international media coverage.

[137] Here Penglase is summarising the thrust of work by Brazilian social scientists, referencing Roberto Da Matta, Luiz Antonio Machado da Silva, Luiz Eduardo Soares and Alba Zaluar.

[138] *Funk* is a musical practice produced and consumed principally by young people from the favelas of Rio de Janeiro (Carvalho Lopes 2009: 370), a 'hybrid *performance* resulting from an intense process of appropriation, transformation and nationalization of *hip hop* culture' ['*uma* performance *híbrida resultante de um intenso processo de apropriação, transformação e nacionalização da cultura* hip-hop'] (Carvalho Lopes 2009: 372, emphasis in original). A *baile funk* is a funk party.

Given this situation and the fact that an emphasis on violence and drug trafficking in media representations is central to the marginalisation and criminalisation of favelas and their residents, I imagined, when planning my fieldwork, that local content published on the internet by favela residents was more likely to focus on those everyday aspects of favela life which are largely overlooked in the media. However, I did encounter content about violence, a fact that was probably at least in part due to the conflict which took place in part of Maré during the period of my fieldwork. I found that content produced by residents approached the topic of violence from a perspective that was somewhat different to that of the mainstream media. It was much more nuanced and focused on how the violence affected the everyday life of favela residents, and also differed in the textual genres used, which were mainly not journalistic in inspiration. Violence was also framed by content creators as one aspect of life among many in favelas, and one that had received disproportionate attention in the media, while other less stigmatised features of local life were neglected or overlooked entirely. These empirical observations arising from the work of individual content creators are also reflected on one of the best-known project websites publishing local content about Rio's favelas, *Viva Favela*. On the website's 'about us' page, there is explicit reference to its differential approach to one of the most prominent and challenging topics in mainstream representations of favelas:

> From an 'insider viewpoint', the site showcases culture, creative strategies for overcoming daily difficulties, and potential for proposing and implementing positive social changes. Violence also appears [in the coverage], but according to the perspective of favela residents, who are rarely heard by the traditional media (Viva Favela 2.0, n.d.).[139]

As Cruz (2007: 88) has pointed out, therefore, negative discourses about favelas are so deeply rooted in Brazilian society, that 'when the favela resident has the chance to speak for herself or himself, these references are employed in an attempt to counter them'.[140] Nonetheless, it is important not to generalise. An alternative approach, observed by researchers looking at a web portal run by residents of an urban periphery neighbourhood in the Brazilian city of Fortaleza (Farias Oliveira & Dutra Ferreira 2007), may be to opt not to cover violence precisely because this is so prevalent in media texts, and to focus attention entirely on everyday life in the area, and its positive aspects.

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[139] *'Com um olhar "de dentro", o site mostra a cultura, a criatividade das estratégias para vencer os desafios diários, o potencial para propor e operar mudanças sociais positivas. A violência também aparece, mas pela perspectiva do morador, que raramente é ouvido pela mídia tradicional.'*

[140] *'quando o morador de favela tem oportunidade de falar de si próprio, utiliza-se de tais referências na tentativa de contrapô-los'*

Within mainstream journalism, developments in social media mean that journalists do now have increased access to favelas, and at the same time, that increasing amounts of content generated directly by favela residents are available. It may also be that the state government's occupation since the end of 2008 of a number of favelas through its UPP favela scheme has facilitated the access of the media to certain favelas, although increased access does not necessarily mean a change in perspective. However, following global trends towards the inclusion of hyperlocal or user-generated content in the mainstream media, particularly in their internet presence (Deuze 2006: 72; Singer & Ashman 2009: 3),[141] some specific initiatives have been set up to encourage and highlight this type of content in Brazilian media coverage of favelas and similar areas. For example, the *G1* website, *TV Globo*'s news portal,[142] has established a scheme, called *Parceiro do RJ,* to produce content about the city and its neighbourhoods (including two favelas, Cidade de Deus and Complexo do Alemão) from a resident's perspective.[143] Another initiative in this area is the *'Favela Livre'* blog on the *O Globo* website, launched in December 2010. As the description of the blog shows, however, the focus on crime and violence is still prominent in its approach:

> A blog that brings to light experiences of residents oppressed by the violence of organised crime in the favelas of Rio de Janeiro. The content is produced by GLOBO journalists and researchers and is open to collaboration by residents, who are guaranteed anonymity.[144] (Favela Livre n.d.)

The ongoing emphasis on violence and the spectacular also remains evident in other examples of how the mainstream media approaches user-generated content representing favelas. An article in *The New Yorker* magazine, for example, mentions that a Rio-based crime reporter admitted to using Orkut to get leads for stories about drug traffickers and commented that the police do the same (Anderson 2009: 52). Similarly, an article on *O Dia*'s website in October 2009 about YouTube videos (apparently posted by residents of nearby areas) of the conflict in the Morro dos Macacos favela, which gained international attention when a police helicopter was shot down by local drug traffickers on 17 October 2009, carried a quote from the Military Police saying that the videos were being examined by its intelligence service to see if any criminals could be identified (O Dia Online 2009). Other

[141] For a Brazilian example, see Mendes (2009) who considers the *'Eu-Repórter'* section of *O Globo*'s website.

[142] The *Globo* media conglomerate has historically been one of the most powerful and influential in Brazil. Key arms include *TV Globo* (and affiliates) and *O Globo* and *Extra* newspapers. Globo also owns satellite television channels, radio stations, websites, magazine publishers, music labels, film and video distribution companies and more.

[143] A list of the URLs of web-based projects publishing content about favelas mentioned in this chapter is provided in an appendix.

[144] *'Um blog que traz à tona histórias vividas por moradores oprimidos pela violência do crime organizado em favelas do Rio. Conteúdo produzido por jornalistas do GLOBO, pesquisadores e aberto à colaboração de moradores, que têm garantido o anonimato'.*

examples, however, show how user-generated content by favela residents may be picked up and given greater visibility through reposting on other sites, rather than being approached simply as a potential source of information about criminal activities. For instance, a post on the *Extra* newspaper's *Caso de Polícia* blog in September 2009 entitled 'Residents use video to show what they feel and experience during the drug trafficking war',[145] included the following sentence: 'They are ordinary people and even though they are used to the routine of war, they have taken the decision to try to show society what they are going through' (Carvalho 2009).[146] Around the same time, Global Voices (2009), which describes itself as 'an international community of bloggers who report on blogs and citizen media from around the world', published a post on its website providing 'A view from slum dwellers on Rio's drugs war', which brought together material from a range of sources including the *Viva Favela* portal. In November 2010, the BBC website published an article entitled 'Rio favela tweets create overnight celebrity', reporting on the use of Twitter by a teenage resident of the Complexo do Alemão favela in northern Rio to report on the invasion of his neighbourhood by security forces in a crackdown on drug traffickers after a wave of attacks across the city (Hirsch 2010).

These examples shed some light on how the internet may open up new possibilities for the representation of favelas by their residents, with the potential of achieving translocal visibility, but also suggest that the reception of such content and the way it is framed by other actors may still reproduce some more established patterns. In particular, it seems that the preference for the dramatic and spectacular (Leu 2004: 351) remains, as does the tendency to focus primarily on violence at the expense of other aspects of favela life. In chapter 4 of this thesis, I discuss an example of a more self-reflexive narrative about violence produced and shared by a favela resident on the internet, and consider how it gained translocal visibility through its circulation and reposting by its author and other content creators.

Violence is to some extent unavoidable when discussing favelas, as my empirical chapters show, but it is not the full story, and more nuanced explorations of this topic are possible, and necessary. In addition, citizen journalism is only one possible mode of local content creation and dissemination among many. However, I have covered the media in some detail in this chapter because the local content creators whose work I observed in my research often framed their content creation in relation (or in opposition) to external or dominant

[145] '*Moradores relatam em vídeos o que sentem e vivem na guerra do tráfico*'
[146] '*São pessoas comuns que, mesmo acostumados com essa rotina de guerra, resolveram agora, de alguma maneira, mostrar à sociedade o que vivem*'

representations of favelas, and particularly those circulated by the media. In the following section, I examine the new forms of visibilities being produced and achieved by favela residents through their own representations, and the different actors who are involved in promoting these.

New visibilities and self-representation

In Jaguaribe's discussion of the crisis of representation affecting Rio and its favelas, she points to the increased participation of previously unheard actors in this arena:

> The democratization of Brazilian society has brought to the forefront formerly silenced and invisible protagonists. As never before, the urban poor, the favela communities, and the victims of social discrimination are voicing their rights to consumption and representation. (2009: 220)

This social, cultural and political shift has also been attributed to the emergence of an 'insurgent urban citizenship' in Brazil by anthropologist James Holston (2009: 261), who contrasts this with the 'differentiated citizenship' which had previously been the status quo in the country.[147] Favelas – and some of their residents – are therefore increasingly visible in Brazil and abroad, and the internet is one of the channels, alongside other digital technologies, being used to attain this visibility by what Ivana Bentes (2007a: 55) terms 'new subjects of discourse' from the Brazilian urban peripheries. As well as producing culture, Bentes argues that these actors produce a discourse on racism, police violence and poverty to rival that of academics and the media. However, not all new subjects of discourse from favelas are the celebrities and personalities (such as dancers, filmmakers, actors and musicians) which some favela-based groups cultivate and present to the media to counter negative stereotypes of favela residents (Ramos 2007: 241), and not all necessarily have such a high profile.

Valladares herself, who identified the dogmas recurrent in scholarship on favelas discussed earlier in the chapter, recognises that despite their ongoing entrenchment, the reality of favelas today is more complex; she identifies the internet as one area where this can be perceived (2005: 153). Indeed, it is given prominence in the title of her book, *A invenção da*

[147] However, note that Holston (2009: 263) is ambivalent about whether what he describes as 'these "marginal" idioms of tagging, rap, fashion, racial polarization, "dissing," and defiance', referring specifically to practices in the city of São Paulo, can be considered expressions of insurgent citizenship. In his formulation of this concept, he was primarily referring to activism such as that taking place around housing and land rights in squatter settlements of that same city.

favela: Do mito de origem a favela.com.[148] In its final chapter, she provides a brief overview of the range of websites run by NGOs, social programmes, samba schools, tourist agencies and accommodation providers, and also considers the content of a website produced by a community television channel in the Rocinha favela. As I show in the second part of this chapter, access to the internet in Brazil has significantly increased since Valladares' book was published in 2005. Internet content from and about favelas has therefore also expanded in this period, both that originating from social and cultural projects, businesses and tourism and, as my research shows, content produced by individual favela residents.

There has been a particular increase in the number of web-based projects publishing local content about the favelas or urban periphery areas in other Brazilian cities, often, but not always, set up and supported by NGOs. Well-established examples include the *Viva Favela* website run by NGO *Viva Rio*, which has already been mentioned briefly above. It was set up in 2001, and published content produced by a network of correspondents in Rio favelas in collaboration with professional journalists,[149] but relaunched as *Viva Favela 2.0* in 2010, inviting contributions from a more extensive, nationwide network of users and incorporating web 2.0 tools such as Twitter. In 2011, *Viva Favela* is marking its tenth anniversary and the celebrations have included the first meeting of its nationwide network of community correspondents.

Other project-based sources of internet content relating to favelas collectively speaking include the *Observatório de Favelas*,[150] the *Agência de Notícias das Favelas (ANF)*, and the *Wikimapa* mapping project which was mentioned above and is run by the NGO *Rede Jovem*. *Favela.info* publishes content written by favela residents who have participated in a training course organised by the Catalytic Communities NGO.[151] The *Central Única das Favelas* (CUFA) and *Afroreggae* are also well-known NGOs working in favelas, which maintain active websites. Some local content sites relating to specific favelas are the *Portal Comunitário da Cidade de Deus*, *Rocinha.org* and *FavelaDaRocinha.Com*. *Projeto Morrinho* is based in the Pereira da Silva favela in Rio and posts award-winning animation videos set in a giant model favela. *Voz das Comunidades* is run by a group in the Complexo do Alemão, led by the teenager mentioned in the BBC article cited earlier in this chapter (Hirsch 2010), although it

[148] *The Invention of the Favela: From the Originating Myth to Favela.com*
[149] For more on *Viva Favela* see Ramalho (2007).
[150] As well as the content on the 'news and analysis' section of its own website, the organisation has been involved in a number of capacity-building and content creation projects such as the *Escola Popular de Comunicação Crítica* (*Espocc*) media training programme and the *Imagens do Povo* photography project.
[151] The same NGO provides English-language content about favelas on a sister site called RioOnWatch.Org.

now has pretensions of becoming a portal for favelas more widely. *Favela é isso aí* is a site about favelas developed in the city of Belo Horizonte. Other related projects which have attracted attention from researchers are the *Ocupar Espaços* project run by NGO *Oficina de Imagens* in Belo Horizonte (Cruz 2007), and the *Capao.com.br* website from the periphery of São Paulo (Sá 2007) – the latter was also included in a comparative examination of sites and portals presenting visual self-representations from the periphery, alongside *Viva Favela* and the *Olhares do Morro* photography project (Tacca 2009). This is by no means an exhaustive list of projects or research in this area, but it gives an overview of some of the better-known initiatives. The majority of the projects now also have a presence on Twitter and other social media platforms such as Orkut, Facebook and YouTube. Additionally, since the Rio state government's UPP favela pacification scheme began, a group of related projects have emerged, targeting young people in the affected favelas, providing them with training in the use of social media and encouraging them to produce internet content about the areas where they live. These include the *Correspondentes da Paz* project and *Agência Redes para a Juventude*.

Many of the earlier generation of local content projects relating to favelas, such as *Viva Favela*, were explicitly established with the aim of presenting a positive view of urban periphery communities on the internet (Ramalho 2007: 47; Sá 2007: 126) or at least of challenging existing perceptions and representations of favelas (Gomes da Cunha 2007). One observer of these sites raises an important question about the representativity of the content produced by such projects:

> The sophistication of the resources used in the construction of favela histories cannot prevent a questioning of whether these instruments – favela websites – are 'representative' of the voices of their residents. There are disagreements and criticisms about the authenticity of these representations and the legitimacy of their producers in 'speaking' in name of the residents of favela communities. (Gomes da Cunha 2008: 192)

Here it is important to remember the more general points about the diversity of favelas and their residents made near the start of this chapter. Partly as a response to the critiques outlined by Gomes da Cunha, my own study has focused on content produced by individuals for publication on their own, independently maintained, blogs, rather than looking at content generated in project settings. However, I do recognise that some connections may exist between such content and the content produced by projects. For example, those creating content independently may previously have participated in training offered by NGOs, or their content may be picked up and reposted on project websites after its initial publication on a blog. The point about diversity is applicable to both types of content, even if content

produced by individuals does not carry the same burden of implicit representativity which may be attached to content produced by projects. My exploratory mapping of internet content produced by residents of Maré showed me that the content published on blogs which explicitly engages with the representation of place, which is my focus on in this study, is only one type of content among many being produced by people living in the local area.[152] Reflecting the diversity of these areas, the nature and volume of content originating from other Rio favelas may be quite different.

However, there is one feature common to the projects mentioned above and the type of content I consider in this thesis, as forms of favela representation. Both are indicative of the trend, identified by Valladares in an interview (Rodrigues 2010), towards 'the affirmation of those who see things from the inside, which lends propriety to the person speaking';[153] she attributes this particularly to factors such as the increasing number of favela residents attending university[154] and conducting their own research on favelas. As I have already briefly mentioned, affirmation, in this case an explicitly 'territorial affirmation' (Ramos 2007: 242)[155] in which specific favelas are referenced in song lyrics, clothing and imagery, has been a theme of projects run by young people from Brazilian favelas and urban peripheries since the 1990s, as a response to territorial stigmatisation. This trend can also be clearly observed in local content projects on the internet, as well as in other types of cultural expressions originating from favelas and other urban periphery areas such as audiovisual production (Zanetti 2010b), and literature (Peçanha do Nascimento 2009). In drawing attention to the territorial embeddedness of people and of cultural production, this territorial affirmation also constitutes an attempt to remap the city.

Jaguaribe and Hetherington (2004: 165) have proposed the idea of a mapless city as a way to conceptualise the interactions between representations of the city and the favela, and how everyday practices challenge stereotypes in ways that are hard to pin down. They suggest that,

> such indistinct contact zones are porous, contradictory, and permanently negotiated. They are constructed by daily social practices and imageries, producing shifting mental maps that lie outside conventional urban imageries. (Jaguaribe & Hetherington 2004: 165)

[152] Other types of content included Orkut communities relating to favelas and their sub-areas and leisure spaces or activities (such as *lan houses*, *bailes funk* and snackbars), Orkut profiles, websites and blogs produced by local NGOs and social, cultural, educational and sporting projects, as well as local cultural producers and businesses.

[153] *'a afirmação de quem está vendo de dentro, o que dá propriedade a quem fala'*

[154] For more on this trend see de Souza e Silva (2003) on the experiences and background of university students from Maré.

[155] *'afirmação territorial'*

More concretely, Adriana Carvalho Lopes (2009) has shown how the lyrics of *funk* music – which make frequent references to specific favelas, streets, and leisure spaces within favelas – construct a new cartography for the city of Rio de Janeiro, one in which favelas are integrated and differentiated from each other as lived spaces. Drawing a comparison between dominant discourse and the discourse of funk, she writes:

> [The representations of hegemonic groups] create a discourse which silences local voices and demarcate the 'favela territories' as a generic space of danger and barbarity connected, uniquely and exclusively, to drug trafficking. However, in *funk,* each favela has a name and is signified as a heterogeneous space and a space of residence. In other words, the language of *funk* 'gives meaning' to the favela, 'making visible' other maps and 'sketching out' other trajectories in the city of Rio de Janeiro. *Funk* gives a name to each favela and the spaces within it. (Carvalho Lopes 2009: 379, emphasis in original)[156]

As I suggested in chapter 1, in my discussion of user-generated mapping on the internet and more broadly speaking, of the role of web 2.0 in opening up the representation of place on the internet, the publication of local content on the internet by favela residents can also be approached as a 'performative, participatory and political' (Crampton 2009: 840) form of urban (re)mapping. Like the *funk* artists whose lyrics were studied by Carvalho Lopes, local content creators from the favelas name, and thus increase the visibility of, marginalised and often overlooked places in Rio de Janeiro. As Maia and Krapp (2006: 4-5) point out in their analysis of digital culture in Rio's Mangueira favela, these may include specific leisure spaces whose informal names emerged out of local slang and sociality, but which are nonetheless affirmed and given local and translocal visibility on the internet through Orkut communities and fotologs. My own research shows that through the texts, images and videos they publish on the internet, local content creators connect favelas and their subareas in an inclusive and affirmative cartography that challenges mainstream representations of the city. Nonetheless, working mainly in a personal capacity, outside the scope of projects, their audiences and potential visibility may be more limited than the *funk* artists in Carvalho Lopes' research.

Overall, however, the possibilities for visibility are on the rise. McCann (2006: 162) argues that 'Rio favelas have once again reached a cyclical high point in their influence on Brazil's

[156] '*[As representações dos grupos hegemônicos] criam um discurso que silencia as vozes locais e delimitam os "territórios favelas" como um espaço genérico do perigo e da barbárie ligada, única e exclusivamente, ao tráfico de drogas. Porém, no* funk, *cada favela tem nome próprio e é significada como um local heterogêneo e de habitação. Em outras palavras, a linguagem do* funk *"dá sentido" à favela: "fazendo ver" outros mapas e "desenhando" diferentes percursos na Cidade do Rio de Janeiro. O* funk *veste com nome próprio cada favela e os espaços no interior dela.*'

popular culture' and it is certainly true that projects and initiatives originating in the favelas, as well as the individuals and groups involved in them, have been gaining greater prominence in recent years. Nonetheless, some observers take a more nuanced, even sceptical, view of this development and its real reach:

> Within the favelas, the response to favela chic is mixed. Songs about favela pride turn the derision and commodification upside down. The lyrics of local rap, hip hop, funk, Afro Reggae, and samba songs spin the meaning of favela into a point of pride and insurgent identity, as in the popular songs 'Eu sou favela' (I am favela) and 'Minha favela' (My favela). [...] But make no mistake: if the word *favela* has been reappropriated by favela residents, it remains a term of derision in the rest of society. (Perlman 2010: 332; emphasis in original)

This comment serves as a timely reminder that despite some advances, many hierarchies and prejudices in Brazilian society continue to work against favelas, as the discussion of dominant representations in the first part of this chapter showed.

Nonetheless, the affirmative stance on favelas also has a broader dimension, connected to the Brazilian concept of '*periferia*', or urban periphery.[157] Although the term tends to be more associated with São Paulo than with Rio, where urban periphery neighbourhoods are located more literally on the periphery of the city, it is also an important category of identity and cultural production which is used to refer to people and places in a variety of locations throughout Brazil, including favelas.[158] This was clear in a manifesto published in 2006 by anthropologist and cultural producer Hermano Vianna to mark the launch of a television programme called *Central da Periferia* (Periphery Central) on *TV Globo*,[159] which lauded 'the appearance of the direct voice of the periphery speaking loudly in all corners of the country'[160] and that this periphery 'no longer needs intermediaries' (2006: 1).[161]

An important factor in the increased visibility of the Brazilian periphery and its cultural production in recent years has been the growth in levels of internet access, and access to digital technologies more broadly speaking, by its residents. I have already touched on this indirectly in the first part of this chapter where I provided an overview of web-based projects

[157] As I noted in chapter 1, the Brazilian concept of *periferia* is both spatial reference and a form of identification which goes beyond space.

[158] One dimension of this affirmation of the periphery, which I discuss in chapter 5, has been the reclaiming of the noun/adjective '*marginal*', commonly employed by the police and media when referring to criminals or suspected criminals in Brazil, and its resignified use in the context of cultural expressions, particularly literature, produced by residents of urban periphery neighbourhoods in Brazil.

[159] The manifesto was published as a full-page announcement in several Brazilian newspapers on 8 April 2006, the day the programme was first broadcast (Vianna 2006). For more on *Central da Periferia* see McCann (2008: 139-140, 152).

[160] '*o aparecimento da voz direta da periferia falando alto em todos os lugares do país*'

[161] '*não precisa mais de intermediários*'

publishing local content about favelas, as well as the mainstream media's interaction with user-generated content produced by favela residents. In the second part of the chapter, I now look directly at Brazilian digital culture, focusing on existing data and research, both quantitative and qualitative, about internet use by people living in favelas and other urban periphery neighbourhoods and situate these in a broader national context.

Researching Brazilian digital culture

Latin Americanists and Brazilianists in the UK have so far paid relatively little attention to the wide-ranging research questions raised by internet use and digital culture in Brazil.[162] To signal the broader importance of this area of investigation, it is worth pointing out that the emergence of digital media has been identified by a leading US-based Brazilianist (McCann 2008: 9), as one of the six trends that have most changed Brazil since the 1980s.[163] As he goes on to argue, the rise in access to digital technologies in the country has 'yielded profound cultural consequences, shaking hierarchies and altering patterns of production' (McCann 2008: 10). Whilst my own findings suggest that access to the internet by favela residents has challenged some hierarchies, but by no means removed them, the need for a more nuanced assessment of the effects and implications of digital culture for the representation of marginalised urban neighbourhoods in Brazil does not take away from the central assertion that digital culture constitutes a viable and compelling area of research for understanding contemporary Brazil.

Even the field of (global) internet studies itself has seen limited coverage of non-Anglophone contexts, with Latin America particularly neglected. There was no chapter on the Latin American region or any of its countries in a recent edited collection entitled *Internationalizing Internet Studies* (Goggin & McLelland 2009b), which had a predominantly Asia-Pacific focus, nor was a chapter on a Latin American case study included in a book about international

[162] A handful of academic events have taken place in the UK on this topic in the past five years. A symposium on 'Latin American Cyberculture and Cyberliterature' was organised at the University of Leeds in 2006. One outcome of the symposium was an edited book (Taylor & Pitman 2007), which included two chapters on Brazil. The Association of Hispanists of Great Britain and Ireland (AHGBI) annual conference in 2008 included a panel on 'Latin American Cyberculture' and in 2011 a panel on 'Communication and Media Studies in Latin America' at the Society of Latin American Studies (SLAS) annual conference incorporated two papers on digital culture in Brazil. Finally, in May 2011 the International Conference on Latin American Cybercultural Studies took place at the University of Liverpool, the first event of its kind in the UK, and included five presentations about different aspects of digital culture in Brazil.

[163] The others were: the coming to power of the left wing, rising urban violence, the conflict between agribusiness and landless workers in rural Brazil, cultural diversification (especially in music), and the growing popularity of Pentecostal religions.

blogging (Russell & Echchaibi 2009). A recently published handbook of internet studies (Hunsinger, Klastrup & Allen 2010) did include a chapter on 'The Internet in Latin America' by Brazil-based researchers (Fragoso & Maldonado 2010), although this was the only regionally-focused contribution to the volume. The only book in English to look directly at cyberculture in the region remains Claire Taylor and Thea Pitman's edited collection from 2007, which takes a cultural studies approach.

Despite the omission of Latin America, the editors of one of the volumes mentioned above make important general points about the ongoing development of internet studies and the need for more research on non-Anglophone and non-metropolitan contexts. Goggin and McLelland (2009a: 4-5) argue that English-speaking communications and media scholars have not registered the challenge posed 'to the concepts, methods, assumptions, and frameworks used to study the internet' by the worldwide growth in internet users and the internet's increasing localisation, and also note that very little internet scholarship undertaken by non English-speaking researchers is translated into English, limiting the theoretical (and, I would add, empirical) contribution it is able to make to global internet studies. This observation certainly applies to research originating in Latin America and in Brazil. English-language work on digital culture in Brazil is currently rather limited, although several useful articles covering this topic have been published in the last couple of years, notably by Pretto and Guedes Bailey (2010) and Horst (2011).[164] Wherever relevant, I have therefore drawn on work published in Portuguese by Brazilian scholars in this study.

Researchers from the area of journalism, communication and media studies have tended to dominate internet studies in Brazil so far (Schwartz 2008; Amaral & Montardo 2010). In recent years, however, topics relating to digital culture have also gained a designated space at the country's leading social sciences conferences. It has been suggested that the Brazilian field of internet studies can be more overtly theoretical than the international or Anglophone field (Schwartz 2008; Amaral & Montardo 2010), and whilst I agree that this slant does exist, my own review of research has also identified relevant empirical work, some of which is included in this chapter. There has also been a suggestion that trends such as the relatively limited research so far on mobile phones in Brazil, despite their intensive use in the

[164] Horst's article was part of a collection on 'New Media in International Contexts', produced by researchers connected to the Digital Media and Learning Research Hub at the University of California, Irvine and originally published on the 'Futures of Learning' blog. The other countries covered were China, Ghana, India and South Korea.

country,[165] may reflect a disconnect between academic priorities and user practices (Schwartz 2008: 3). As Heather Horst has pointed out in a review of research into new media practices in Brazil, such empirical gaps may restrict the conclusions which it is possible to draw about the overall changes effected in Brazilian society as a result of increased use of digital technologies:

> We are only beginning to understand the everyday dimensions of Internet usage in Brazil [...] there have been many efforts at the top-down level of the government, as well as those at the grassroots level, to facilitate digital inclusion. Yet it remains unclear whose Internet we may be talking about, as well as the extent to which such participation has truly transformed the well-entrenched hierarchies in Brazil. (Horst 2011: 453)

Whilst much of the empirical research in Brazil initially focused on elite uses, a shift can now be observed towards research which better represents the diverse contexts of internet use which exist in the country, and particularly how the internet and digital technologies are being used by non-elite Brazilians. Nonetheless, this consideration of what has been called '*cultura popular digital*' ('digital popular culture')[166] still represents a relatively small proportion of overall internet research in and on the country. This reduced coverage of the digital culture of non-elite groups is not a trend restricted to Brazil, and Franklin has argued compellingly for the inclusion of such perspectives and practices in internet research, broadly speaking:

> Positing that the Internet is indelibly drawn by multifarious and noncommercial uses and adaptations by nonelite, nonWestern, and nonexpert practitioners reminds us that there is more than one version of events, and future, at stake. (2004: 216)

Research centred on internet use by members of non-elite groups in Brazil, such as my own, thus contributes to the development of a more diversified and representative narrative on digital culture in the country.

As Horst (2011: 438) has shown in her review of the literature, Brazilian digital culture has so far been characterised according to three principal themes: digital inclusion; free culture and ownership of the means of its production and distribution; and networked sociality. I concur with Horst in this formulation, and find that her summary well encapsulates some common features of what is naturally a diverse arena of practices and uses. It is the first and third features identified by Horst in particular that explain why Brazil represents a fruitful and compelling research context from which to approach the study of local content creation by marginalised groups. As I suggested earlier, research into digital culture in Brazil is also important for the diversification of the field of internet studies as a whole, as well as the

[165] There are now more mobile phones in Brazil than people (International Telecommunications Union 2010).
[166] This is a term attributed to Brazilian anthropologist Hermano Vianna (Bentes 2007a: 59).

ongoing development of Latin American studies and Brazilian studies. With this in mind, I now present some key characteristics of Brazilian digital culture as a whole, before moving on to consider aspects of *cultura digital popular* more specifically.

Internet access and digital inclusion in Brazil

Brazil has around 36% of the total internet users in the Latin American region (Internet World Stats, n.d.) – and often tops global rankings of social network site usage, as I discuss later in the chapter in the section on web 2.0 appropriation in Brazil. However, Fragoso and Maldonado (2010: 205) point out that while '[t]he sheer scale of the absolute numbers for Brazil mean that the country is frequently included among the richest nations when absolute values for the indicators of access to and use of the internet are considered', the percentages of the population actually enjoying good access to the internet are not themselves that high in real terms.[167] Overall figures for internet access in Brazil therefore continue to mirror broader socioeconomic and regional inequalities in the country, and this key point is regularly made by the *Centro de Estudos sobre as Tecnologias de Informação e Comunicação* (CETIC.br), the research arm of the Brazilian multistakeholder internet governance committee, the *Comitê Gestor da Internet no Brasil* (CGI.br).

CETIC.br was set up in 2005 and is a key source of quantitative data, producing annual surveys of ICT use in Brazilian homes and companies. Since its 2008 edition, the survey, known as the *Pesquisa TIC Domicílios e Usuários*,[168] has provided data on both urban and rural areas of the country. IBGE, the government body responsible for an annual household survey known as the *Pesquisa Nacional de Amostra por Domicílios* (PNAD), as well as the Brazilian census, also provides some data on access to and use of ICTs. The Brazilian media have a keen interest in digital culture and often report on research carried out by private companies, whether Brazilian or international, as well as the public data mentioned above. Finally, many non-governmental organisations in Brazil carry out their own research which provides data directly or indirectly relating to internet use and digital culture.[169]

[167] Fragoso and Maldonado cite a figure of 22.4% for Brazilians with home internet access, provided in 2008 by the Miniwatts Marketing Group, at a time when Brazil had the largest number of home internet users in Latin America and the sixth largest in the world.
[168] Residences and Users ICT Survey
[169] Fragoso and Maldonado (2010: 202) make an important point about using quantitative data from multiple external sources, cautioning against drawing conclusions from studies based on different methodologies and concepts (such as how an 'internet user' is defined). My aim in this chapter is not to provide definitive quantitative data on digital culture in Brazil, but to draw on different data sources to provide an overall picture of trends. As will

Figures from all of the sources mentioned above show that use of ICTs and particularly the internet has expanded significantly in Brazil in recent years as a result of market and economic opportunities as well as efforts by the public sector and civil society to promote digital inclusion.[170] Figures for 2009 from CETIC.br show that 39% of Brazilians were internet users (CETIC.br 2010d); in urban areas, this figure rose to 43% (CETIC.br 2010c).[171] As I noted in the thesis introduction, the proportion of urban residents with internet access in 2005 was 24% (CETIC.br 2006), showing the significant increase in the intervening years. In 2009, public access to the internet continued to be important in the country, particularly via *lan houses*. At the height of their popularity, in 2007, just under half (49%) of Brazilian internet users frequented *lan houses* (CETIC.br 2008). However, in 2009 the figure for *lan house* use fell for the second year running as greater numbers of Brazilians gained access to the internet at home, including those in lower social classes and lower income groups (CETIC.br 2010c). Nonetheless, *lan houses* have been centrally important for *cultura popular digital* in Brazil, as I discuss below.

In 2009, CETIC.br found that 36% of urban homes had a computer and 27% of urban homes had an internet connection (CETIC.br 2010c), compared to 28% and 20% respectively in 2008 (CETIC.br 2009). This increase reflects the falling cost of personal computers, rising incomes, access to credit and special schemes to enable the purchase of computers by those on lower incomes, in particular the federal government's *Computador para Todos* (Computers for All) programme.[172] However, as in previous years, the CETIC.br report published in 2010 emphasises that internet access figures in Brazil continue to mirror entrenched inequalities: higher household income correlates with higher levels of access and richer regions of the country had higher levels of ICT usage (CETIC.br 2010a: 4). In addition, a factor with particular implications for home-based internet access for those living in favelas and other urban periphery neighbourhoods is that the cost of broadband internet in Brazil

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become clear, although I am cautious about drawing conclusions based only on market research, I believe such data usefully complements the official figures from bodies such as CETIC.br and IBGE.

[170] Digital inclusion in Brazil can also be attributed in part to the privatisation of telecommunications, and in particular of the state-run telephone company Telebrás, in the late 1990s. Before this, phone lines were very expensive and there were long waiting times for installation. Privatisation also facilitated the growth of the mobile phone industry in Brazil and made it possible for lower-income Brazilians to have a phone for the first time (McCann 2008: 34-35).

[171] Although data for 2010 is now available, I refer primarily to figures for 2009 as this corresponds to the period of my fieldwork.

[172] See Schoonmaker (2009: 557-561) for a detailed examination of this programme. Many commercial retailers in Brazil offer lower-cost computers for sale, including the domestically produced Positivo brand, which can be paid for in interest-free or low-interest installments.

remains one of the highest in the world (Lang 2010; Zmoginski 2009); many connections also fall below internationally recognised speeds for broadband (AURESIDE 2009 cited in Pretto & Guedes Bailey 2010: 268). At the end of June 2011 the Brazilian government announced the details of its *Plano Nacional de Banda Larga* (PNBL), an initiative which aims to make a 1 Mbps broadband connection, priced at R$35 per month,[173] available nationwide by 2014 (Amato 2011). However, observers have suggested that this price may still be too high for the emerging lower middle classes who are the scheme's most likely users (Caribé 2011) and civil society activists have established the '*Banda Larga é um direito seu!*'[174] campaign to fight for cheap, quality internet for all.

Despite many ongoing and persistent challenges, the Brazilian federal government has nonetheless played a key role over the past decade (but particularly under President Luiz Inácio 'Lula' Da Silva's Workers' Party (PT) administration from 2003 to 2010)[175] in developing and implementing what many observers and participants view as a pioneering approach to digital inclusion and ICT policy more broadly. As Horst (2011: 443) observes, this approach has reflected a 'broader concern with social justice and the potential of new media and technology to bridge the social and digital divides prevalent throughout Brazilian society'. One key tenet has been the promotion and use of free and open source software in different arenas,[176] and Pretto and Guedes Bailey (2010) and Schoonmaker (2009) provide useful overviews of the origins and implementation of this policy. Overall, however, despite advances the picture has been rather fragmented, with different ministries competing with each other to implement and coordinate digital inclusion policies, rather than taking an integrated approach (Pretto & Guedes Bailey 2010: 272).

Another key dimension of federal government support for digital inclusion has been the establishment and support of a wide range of telecentres, providing free, public access to the internet, as well as the provision of connectivity for schools and telecentres. Telecentres have also been set up and supported by state and municipal governments, NGOs and

[173] This is approximately £13.50 at the August 2011 exchange rate.
[174] 'Broadband is your right!'
[175] As Pretto and Bailey (2010: 267) point out, efforts to build public policy in this area began under the preceding administration of Fernando Henrique Cardoso who was in power for two terms from 1998 to 2002. A multi-stakeholder process led to the preparation of a policy document known as the *Livro Verde da Sociedade da Informação no Brasil*. It is noteworthy that the report included a section on '*Conteúdos e Diversidade Cultural*' (Content and Cultural Diversity) which recognised that with the internet, citizens themselves became content producers and intermediaries (Takahashi 2000: 91).
[176] As Horst (2011: 447) notes, there is significant use of free and open source software in Brazil, by government bodies, universities, telecentres and even supermarkets.

private foundations in Brazil.[177] Whilst telecentres clearly played an important role in widening access to information technology and, later, to the internet in Brazil, particularly at the very end of the 1990s and first half of the 2000s, the current figures for their use in the country pale in comparison to those for *lan houses* (6% of internet users used telecentres in 2007, according to CETIC.br (2008), falling to 4% in 2009 (CETIC.br 2010c)). Unsurprisingly, therefore, the spread and popularity of *lan houses* in favelas and other urban periphery areas, and the subsequent increase in the number of internet users, has attracted increasing attention from researchers and policymakers who view them as potential sites of digital inclusion (Ibict 2008; Minuano 2008; Bandeira de Melo Carvalho 2009; Lemos & Martini 2010), although this is not uncontroversial, with other voices presenting the opposing argument that only projects such as telecentres can play this role (Gonçalves 2007). Although small-scale private entrepreneurs have been behind the emergence of *lan houses*, rather than the government, researchers have suggested that the spread of these facilities became possible, at least in part and/or indirectly, thanks to the federal government's Computers for All programme mentioned on page 113 (Lemos and Martini 2010: 31; Horst 2011: 454).

The popularity of *lan houses* may also reflect some dissatisfaction, particularly by young people, with the restrictions often placed on internet use in telecentres (Horst 2011: 446). Schofield Clark (2003) suggests, based on research in the United States, that a gap often exists between the ideals of digital projects and actual user practices, and reflecting this, many Brazilian digital inclusion projects 'incorporate ideologies about the value of productive or instrumental use of new media and technology' (Horst 2011: 446). For example, despite its popularity in the country, use of the social network site Orkut and other popular services is banned or restricted in some Brazilian telecentres (Bandeira de Melo Carvalho 2009; ONID n.d.). Nonetheless, research in Brazilian telecentres and *lan houses* has found that the skills learned through Orkut use were important for the development of 'cyberliteracies and sociotechnical capital' (Spence 2007: 16). CETIC.br (2010d) data shows that social network sites such as Orkut are popular with all Brazilian internet users, but particularly so with lower middle income and lower income Brazilians: 69% of C class internet users, and 70% of D and E class internet users use these sites, compared to 58% in A class and 63% in B

[177] Detailed information about these projects is available from two yearbooks of digital inclusion projects produced by *ARede* magazine. The first (ARede 2010) listed 67 public sector digital inclusion initiatives across federal, state and municipal governments, and the second (ARede 2011) documented 57 civil society projects in this area run by NGOs and private companies. For a discussion specifically of telecentres in favelas, see Sorj and Guedes (2005) who consider the *Estação Futuro* telecentres set up by Viva Rio. Albernaz (2002) also provides an early account of telecentres in favelas.

class.[178] This disconnect between the policies of digital inclusion initiatives and the intense use and appropriation of web 2.0 platforms by the groups they can be expected to target shows the importance of looking outside project settings when carrying out research on *cultura popular digital.*

One Brazilian federal government policy which perhaps goes against the trend outlined above, and relates more directly to local content creation broadly understood has been the Ministry of Culture's *Cultura Digital* programme. It was originally led by singer Gilberto Gil, who was the country's culture minister from 2003 to 2008 and has attracted a great deal of international attention. The mainstay of this programme was the provision of resources and capacity-building for multimedia grassroots cultural production using open source software to a nationwide network of *Pontos de Cultura* (Cultural Hotspots). *Pontos de Cultura* are self-managed spaces run in collaboration with established NGOs, local community associations, unions and other similar groups (Pretto & Guedes Bailey 2010: 274). They are active in a variety of cultural areas, including theatre, dance, music, and film-making, and their participants include members of indigenous groups, Afro-Brazilians and residents of favelas and urban periphery neighbourhoods. The *Cultura Digital* policy was developed and implemented in 'close liaison with various activists, collective movements and civil society groups working in the field of free and open source software, [...] bringing the "hacker spirit" into the Ministry of Culture' (Pretto & Guedes Bailey 2010: 273). From early on in his tenure, Gilberto Gil also personally endorsed the Creative Commons[179] approach to licensing and open culture, leading to media coverage including a now famous *Wired* magazine article from 2004 (Dibbell 2004). Out of this programme was born a wider grouping of people thinking about and debating different aspects of digital culture in Brazil, and various national events have been organised, including two Digital Culture Forums in 2009 and 2010. At the 2010 Forum, a collaborative timeline of digital culture in Brazil (both the policy and the broader field) was launched and contributions invited (Laboratório Brasileiro de Cultura Digital n.d.).[180] Nonetheless, the appointment of Ana de Hollanda as minister of culture in January 2011, when Dilma Rousseff took over from Lula as president of Brazil, has led to significant protests and mobilisation by civil society who perceive threats to the sustainability of the more progressive aspects of Brazilian culture and digital culture policy, such as public

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[178] A is the highest class, and E is the lowest. I introduce the Brazilian system of socioeconomic classification on page 118.

[179] Creative Commons provides an alternative to copyright and offers licenses which permit the sharing, remix and reuse of material published on the internet.

[180] The timeline includes a reference to the use of Twitter by a teenager from the Alemão favela mentioned in part 1 of this chapter.

consultation on the reform of copyright laws and promotion of open source software (Carta Aberta n.d.).

This review of national statistics and initiatives shows that digital culture is a dynamic and contested arena in Brazil and that there has been an emphasis in policy and projects on digital inclusion and more democratic access to cultural production, information and knowledge, even if some contradictions exist in the sometimes still top-down approaches. In the following section, I narrow my focus and look more specifically at the situation in Rio de Janeiro's favelas and other urban periphery areas, showing how this has largely reflected national trends of rising access and ongoing inequality, and pointing to the importance of *lan houses*, largely in the informal sector, in enabling not just access to the internet in these areas, but also access to learning, culture and entertainment as well as public services. More recently, an increasing number of favela residents have also been able to purchase their own computers, although these are not always connected to the internet in the first instance.

Internet access in the favelas of Rio de Janeiro

It is difficult to access reliable and current data on the levels of internet use in favelas. Bernardo Sorj and Luiz Eduardo Guedes published a comprehensive study in 2005, but it was based on research carried out in 2003, before much of the recent expansion in access and the emergence of key features of contemporary Brazilian digital culture.[181] In their findings, Sorj and Guedes (2005: 6) stressed the diversity of computer and internet access levels both between and within individual favelas. Overall they found that 9% of homes in Rio favelas had computers, while a significantly higher 20.3% reported using a computer (Sorj & Guedes 2005: 7). The figure of 9% was close to the national average for the time and higher than the average for many major cities in the north and north-east of Brazil, but lower than the averages for the state and municipality of Rio (Sorj & Guedes 2005: 4-5). Assuming that this correlation to the national average has persisted, the figure is now likely to be quite a bit higher, given the proportion of Brazilian homes in urban areas with computers in 2009 was 36%, as mentioned earlier. Indeed, confirming this trend, a survey conducted in Rio's Cidade

[181] The spread of *lan houses*, the intensification of government digital inclusion programmes, the launch of the social network site Orkut and its popularisation in Brazil have all taken place since 2003.

de Deus favela by Ibase[182] in 2009 revealed that 34% of those interviewed had a computer at home, whilst only 23% had an internet connection (see Gonçalves 2010).

Another area of data that can help to shed light on the topic of internet use in favelas is data on the use of ICTs disaggregated by class, although this is a somewhat blunt instrument given the diversity of income levels and socioeconomic class among favela residents. The Brazilian system of classification is primarily economic and places people in groups ranging from A1 (highest) to E (lowest) according to points awarded on the basis of their possession of certain items, although it does also consider the educational level of the head of the household.[183] Some insights into the economic class of favela residents are available thanks to the *'Favela, Opinião e Mercado'* survey produced by the *Instituto Superior de Estudos da Religião* (ISER) in 2002. It showed that 51.3% of favela residents could be considered C class, and 24% of them were B class. A small number fell into the A2 class (2.5%) and less than 1% were members of E class (O Plural 2002 cited in Leitão 2009: 40-41).[184] These figures confirm Perlman's (2004: 128) observations about the lack of correlation between poverty and favelas, mentioned in the introduction to this thesis.

Despite the socioeconomic diversity of favela residents, data disaggregated by class can help to give an overall impression of how the use and consumption of technological equipment has been on the rise among this group in recent years, as I briefly mentioned in the thesis introduction. Using the ISER figures cited above as a starting point, I will pay particular attention to the dynamism of Brazil's growing '*classe C*' which attracted a great deal of media attention during the period of my research. Attention-grabbing headlines which made explicit mention to technology included 'The digital middle class' (Roncolato 2010),

[182] Ibase is an influential Rio-based NGO and think tank which pioneered the provision of internet services in Brazil, beginning in the late 1980s with a project called Alternex which provided email and electronic conferencing services to NGOs. Ibase was also one of the founding members of the Association for Progressive Communications, an important international grouping of civil society organisations working on issues relating to internet access and policy (Albernaz 2002: 6; McCann 2008: 135-6; Horst 2011: 443).

[183] See ABEP (2011) for more details of Brazilian socioeconomic categories. The full list of categories is A1, A2, B1, B2, C1, C2, D, E, and the items taken into consideration when categorising people are colour television, radio, bathroom, car, full-time domestic staff, washing machine, video or DVD player, fridge and freezer. CETIC.br uses a simplified version of the system, categorising respondents as A, B, C or D/E. However, it also disaggregates data by income level, using six bands.

[184] The ISER survey also found that 96% of favela residents had a colour television, 55% had a video player and more than 57% had a washing machine. However, the figures for education, which showed that 37% had completed primary education, 13% had completed secondary education, and a mere 1.3% had a university degree, revealed what one of the survey's coordinators called 'the drama of the favela as the expression of the drama of the Brazilian state' ['*o drama da favela como expressão do drama do estado brasileiro*'], demonstrating the inclusion of favela residents in the market, but their lack of access to services such as education, health and public security (GIFE 2002). This recalls Perlman's comments in the section on 'Territory, place and space in favelas' earlier in this chapter, in which she argued favela residents were not marginal, but stigmatised and excluded in many different ways.

'Almost 70% of the Brazilian C class now has access to the internet, says survey' (Maciel 2010), 'C class now buy almost half of electronic goods' (Folha.com 2010b), and finally, 'C class goes to paradise' (Nicacio 2010).[185] If we consider the national figures for domestic computer ownership in Brazil from CETIC.br, disaggregated by social class, for comparison with those already provided above from Sorj and Guedes' study and Ibase's updated figures for Cidade de Deus, we find that 32% of class C respondents reported having a computer at home, whereas the figure for classes D and E was only 5%, compared to 94% for A class and 77% for B class (CETIC.br 2010d). With regard to internet access CETIC.br found that 21% of respondents in class C reported a connection at home, compared to just 3% for classes D and E (for A class the figure was 90%, and for B class it was 64%) (CETIC.br 2010d). The figures for class C are therefore quite similar to those reported by Ibase for the Cidade de Deus favela (there, 34% had a computer at home, whilst only 23% had an internet connection). However, the striking disparity between the different classes reinforces Sorj and Guedes' general point about the diversity within and between individual favelas in relation to internet and ICT access. It also shows that while access to the internet has increased among lower middle-income Brazilians, the figures for the lower income categories still reveal ongoing inequalities.

Returning to Sorj and Guedes' (2005: 9) original findings which relate specifically to internet use in favelas, these showed a gap between the levels of home-based internet access and overall use of the internet, with 3.3% of the favela residents surveyed reporting a connection at home, but 11.6% saying they used the internet. More than half of respondents (51.3%) said their reason for not accessing the internet was the lack of somewhere to do this, rather than cost, cited by only 14.6% (Sorj & Guedes 2005: 45). In 2009, national data showed that 39% of Brazilians were internet users, although the breakdown by class gave 85% for A class, 72% for B class, 42% for C class and 14% for D/E class (CETIC.br 2010d). More up to date data specifically about favelas is piecemeal and somewhat anecdotal, but as the discussion above of the growth of internet access in Brazil implies, it seems the demand for access points in favelas has now been at least partly met by *lan houses* (as well as more recently, the increase in computer ownership and internet connections in people's own homes or those of friends and family). In 2007, for example, there were an estimated 150 *lan houses* in the Maré favela complex alone (Observatório de Favelas 2007b). National data for 2009 showed that *lan houses* were the place most frequently used to access the internet for

[185] See the bibliography for the Portuguese versions of these headlines.

37% of those in class C (compared to 33% using the internet at home) and 62% of those in classes D and E (compared to 10% at home) (CETIC.br 2010d). A survey of 53 Rio favelas found that *lan houses*, along with samba schools or carnival bands, were the most common type of cultural facilities in these areas of the city, which often lacked cultural centres, theatres and cinemas of any kind (Observatório de Favelas 2008: 77-79). Finally, research looking at the experience of children and teenagers from favelas in Rio carried out in 2008 by UNESCO and the NGO Cedaps found that around 90% of those interviewed in three different areas of the city had access to the internet (Observatório de Favelas 2009).

The state government in Rio has also become directly involved in providing internet connectivity in favelas, with mixed results. In 2009, it began to provide free wireless internet in Santa Marta, the first favela to be occupied under the UPP scheme, as part of a broader state-wide project called *Rio Estado Digital*. It has so far been implemented not only in favelas,[186] but also on the beachfront avenues of southern Rio neighbourhoods, the area alongside the Avenida Brasil expressway in northern Rio (which borders parts of Maré),[187] and in cities in the Baixada Fluminense, part of Rio's metropolitan area. The project's early implementation in Santa Marta was widely covered by the local, national and international media. However, NGO coverage of the initiative, based on interviews with local residents, organisations and residents' associations, drew attention to some of the difficulties faced, such as the need to buy a wireless card in some cases, blind spots in coverage and slow speeds (Araújo 2009; Gonçalves 2010). The project has attempted to establish a dialogue with existing *lan houses* in some favelas where it has been implemented, for example in Rocinha, arguing that it is intended to complement rather than compete with these businesses (Schmidt 2010).

The national association of *lan houses*, the *Associação Brasileira de Centros de Inclusão Digital* (ABCID) estimates that there are now around 108,000 *lan houses* in Brazil and that 85% are in the informal sector (Lemos & Martini 2010: 31, 33). The majority are located in favelas, urban periphery neighbourhoods and other low-income areas.[188] These

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186 The scheme is now operational in both pacified favelas, such as Cidade de Deus and Pavão-Pavãozinho, and an unpacified favela, Rocinha.
187 The Avenida Brasil Digital scheme is briefly mentioned in chapter 6.
188 Both the mainstream media and NGO projects have produced coverage showing the importance of *lan houses*. For example, in November 2008 the *Central da Periferia* slot on TV Globo's prime time Sunday night *Fantástico* programme focused specifically on *lan houses* over six weekly episodes (see Central da Periferia 2008). Viewers were encouraged to upload a video of their own *lan house* to a blog, and some of these *lan houses* then featured on the programme. An edition of Viva Favela's collaborative Multimedia Magazine on digital

establishments face many administrative and legal difficulties, largely due to a hostile and onerous regulatory environment which makes it difficult and costly to formalise *lan houses* and prevents stabilisation and expansion of the business and the formation of partnerships with public bodies, resulting in a 'lose-lose situation' (Lemos & Martini 2010: 34). In the meantime, apart from their established position as places of sociality, entertainment and learning, *lan houses* often provide their users with essential and low-cost services such as help with bill payment, tax administration, preparation of cvs and job searches, and access to public services (Lemos & Martini 2010: 34; Pretto & Guedes Bailey 2010: 273). As I mentioned in chapter 2, I spent some time in *lan houses* while exploring potential entry points for my fieldwork, and witnessed the emphasis on service provision in these establishments for myself, as well as their use for gaming and social network sites. I visited *lan houses* with different profiles in Maré – one, located inside a stationery shop, did not offer games, but was popular for services such as the preparation of cvs, tasks associated with searching and applying for public sector jobs (*concurso público*), photocopying and printing, help with school research and homework, downloading and copying of music and photographs onto CDs and DVDs, production of labels and other print materials for local businesses and so on, alongside use of the internet for Orkut and MSN chat. It also offered users support in setting up their Orkut profile or email address, although it seemed this particular service was becoming redundant. Another *lan house* I visited offered a designated space for games and another for internet use, but also provided services such as printing and help with media files. A third, smaller and more basic *lan house* was predominantly used for games and Orkut or MSN, and was frequented primarily by children and teenagers when I visited in the late afternoon.

Increasingly, *lan houses* are also being included in digital inclusion policy and projects by the federal government and non-governmental organisations. For example, in 2009 the NGO CDI (*Comitê para Democratização da Informática*), one of the pioneers in providing public access to the internet for lower income users in Brazil from the mid 1990s onwards, launched a project called CDI Lan specifically aimed at *lan houses*. The project is supported by ABCID, and its ambassador is Regina Casé, the presenter of the *Central da Periferia* programme mentioned earlier (Teixeira 2009). Also in 2009, the São Paulo-based *Fundação Padre Anchieta*, which runs the *TV Cultura* television station, launched its *Conexão Cultura* project

culture in favelas and periphery areas (Viva Favela 2.0 2011) included three contributions specifically about *lan houses*.

at the annual Campus Party event,[189] a major digital culture gathering in Brazil, accompanied by a publication which presented the results of its own research on this topic. The aim of the project was to provide a tool for telecentre and *lan house* users to access 'quality content' supplied by the project's partners (Fundação Padre Anchieta 2009). CETIC.br (2010b) itself has also recently conducted a detailed study of *lan houses* and their operators in 2010. Recent commentary has focused on how *lan houses* are adapting the services they offer to respond to greater domestic ownership of computers with internet connections, with one option being the sale of virtual goods for online games (R. Lemos 2010).[190]

Reflecting their importance for *cultura popular digital* in Brazil, several ethnographic studies of *lan houses* have been produced by Brazilian researchers.[191] Indeed, this is one of the better developed areas of research into the use of the internet in periphery areas in Brazil. One of the first full-length studies was produced by Vanessa Andrade Pereira (2007) who carried out doctoral research in a *lan house* in a low income neighbourhood of the southern city of Porto Alegre, with a particular focus on gaming and youth sociability.[192] A researcher working in Rio, Carla Barros (2008: 212-213), has argued that *lan houses* in favelas function as a sort of 'local club' and that postings made on blogs, fotologs and Orkut by *lan house* users tend to be commentary on events involving school friends and neighbours, reaffirming existing links and potentially serving as a written and visual record of everyday local life. Juliana Batista dos Reis (2010) has combined ethnographic research in a *lan house* in a periphery neighbourhood outside the city of Belo Horizonte with observations of two local Orkut communities, finding that many of the narratives developed by young people on the social network site emphasised the 'positive' aspects of life in the area such as strong solidarity and friendships, countering negative representations and, in some cases, resignifying the idea of the urban periphery. As this work by Barros and Batista dos Reis suggests, web 2.0 platforms such as social network sites and fotologs are being intensively used by residents of Brazilian urban peripheries with internet access, including for local

[189] The launch of the *Conexão Cultura* project at the 2009 edition of Campus Party, which I attended, included a meeting of *lan house* operators in the 'Digital Inclusion' arena, alongside other meetings of telecentres and cultural projects funded by the federal government. Sebrae (a Brazilian organisation which supports small and medium entrepreneurs) also had a presence at Campus Party that year, where it was carrying out a survey of *lan houses*.

[190] This area of activity is covered in Heeks (2008).

[191] Researchers have also conducted ethnographic studies of digital inclusion projects in periphery areas, for example Buzato (2008) and Scalco (2009).

[192] The published article referenced here discusses methodological questions arising from fieldwork in the *lan house*.

content creation, and the following section therefore looks in more detail at existing statistics and research in this area.

Appropriation of social network sites and blogs in Brazil

Beyond access statistics and beyond government and other digital inclusion programmes, it has been noted that the 'intensity of the appropriation of the Internet by Brazilian users [...] has been exceptionally high' (Fragoso 2006: 255-256), an observation which applies particularly to Brazilians' use of social network sites. Global surveys and rankings of internet use – often carried out by the private sector, with an interest in consumer behaviour – tend to highlight Brazilians who access the internet on a regular basis as particularly prolific users of such sites. For example, according to the Nielsen market research company, 86% of Brazilian internet users accessed social network sites in April 2010, a higher proportion than in any other country (IDG Now! 2010). As Horst (2011: 438) has observed, 'Brazilians are clearly leaders in the use and innovation around social media'.

The most popular social network site in Brazil is Orkut, which was set up in 2004 and is owned by Google. User statistics fluctuate, but the proportion of Brazilian users on Orkut has previously been as high as 75% (Recuero 2009b: 168),[193] and Brazilians continue to dominate traffic to the site – comScore data from early 2011 showed that '[a]lmost 90% of pages consumed on Orkut are consumed by Brazilians' (comScore 2011).[194] The photoblogging site Fotolog has also proved particularly attractive to Brazilian internet users.[195] Since 2008, the social network site Facebook and the microblogging platform Twitter have also become increasingly popular in the country, although they are still far from competing with Orkut.[196] Thus, despite the impressive figures for Orkut, which mean that it 'is often seen as synonymous with social network site use in Brazil' (Horst 2011: 451), it is important not to reduce Brazilian digital culture to Orkut. Other well-known platforms used

[193] Orkut is also popular in India.
[194] ComScore is a market research agency which focuses particularly on use of digital technologies.
[195] Recuero (2008: 64 n.2) reports that Brazil was the country with the most Fotologs in 2004 (over 200,000), but that Fotolog stopped making user statistics available in 2006.
[196] For example, comScore data showed that the number of unique visitors to Facebook from Brazil increased five-fold between August 2009 and August 2010 (G1 2010b). A study by Nielsen Online published in 2009 (G1 2009) found that 15% of Brazilian internet users used Twitter, a higher proportion than in the US, UK, Australia or Germany. By 2011 this had risen to 22% (comScore 2011).

extensively in the country include Microsoft's MSN instant messaging service,[197] and YouTube.[198]

Blogs, which are at the heart of this research project, are also widely used and read in Brazil and constitute an important component of digital culture in the country. Google's Blogger.com service is particularly popular in Brazil and the country is the source of the second highest traffic to the site, after the United States (Google 2009). ComScore (2011) found that 71% of Brazilian internet users over the age of 15 who use the internet at home or work accessed blogs and suggested that one of the reasons for the high popularity of blogs in 2010 may have been the national elections held that year. Although the emphasis on home or work access in the ComScore figures would seem to imply that these exclude many lower income Brazilians, CETIC.br (2010d) reports that overall 15% of Brazilian internet users have created a blog or other webpage; when social class is taken into consideration, the figure rises to 19% for both classes A and B, and falls to 14% for class C and 9% for classes D and E together. Although these figures for content creation on blogs are relatively low when compared to Orkut, my research shows that blogs are an important site for the publication of public and visible representations of favelas by their residents.

Nonetheless, despite the range of internet platforms which are used in Brazil, McCann has suggested a general trend in their use, namely that Brazilians tend to use digital media 'to create subcultural niches and crosscultural networks in ways that defy traditional hierarchies and the existing cultural canon' (2008: 131). Although this observation perhaps overlooks the diversity of Brazilian digital culture and the inequalities that still exist within it, it is useful in the way it points to an inventive and irreverent, and sometimes outright contestatory, strand of Brazilian digital culture. These characteristics can also be seen in a particular content event that took place during the 2010 World Cup in South Africa, when Brazilian internet users used the #calabocagalvao hashtag on Twitter to express annoyance with Galvão Bueno, a *TV Globo* sports commentator. The hashtag was soon a Twitter trending topic and attracted international curiosity, which led to the development of a video and other internet content associated with a spoof campaign to save the '*galvão*', an Amazonian bird

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[197] MSN Messenger is part of Windows Live. In August 2010, comScore found there were over 12 million unique users to Windows Live in Brazil, compared to a little over 8 million to Facebook (Demetrio 2011).

[198] According to comScore (2011), 84% of Brazilian internet users over the age of 15 access YouTube and the country has the sixth highest audience of the site worldwide, growing by 33% over the year to February 2011.

supposedly threatened with extinction.[199] For Horst (2011: 438), the mobilisation around this hashtag and the ensuing joke at the expense of non-Portuguese speakers 'revealed the capacity of new media to circulate information and highlighted the broad-scale popularity of social media among Brazilians'.[200] Although large-scale virality is not the focus of my research, such overarching trends in Brazilian digital culture are a useful complement to my discussion of how local content creators in favelas use a range of social media platforms to circulate their content and engage with different audiences, generating content events which sometimes involve multiple repostings of their content as in the case examined in chapter 4.

However, the popularity of social network sites, and particularly Orkut, among lower middle income and lower income Brazilians has caused some conflict.[201] Internet discourse about the perceived 'favelisation'[202] of Orkut has been analysed by Barros, who considers the commentary of what she terms '*internautas "anti-inclusão digital*'' (2011: 9),[203] observing that this reinforces pre-existing stereotypes about favelas and the idea that residents of the urban periphery and members of the lower classes in Brazil should remain confined to specific spaces. In this way, some representations and discourses about digital inclusion in Brazil counter early perceptions of the internet as a democratic space, one of the features of 'popular cyberculture' (Silver 2000), and also reflect broader structures and attitudes of Brazilian society as a whole.[204] There have been suggestions, therefore, that those migrating to Facebook from Orkut were in the first instance members of A and B classes (Felitti 2009; *The Economist* 2010). However, more recently, there have been reports that Facebook is also becoming popular with members of C class Brazilians (Costa 2011). An alternative view of the popularisation of Orkut (and other social media platforms), countering the discourses discussed by Barros, is that with more Brazilians using Orkut, it is being appropriated in varied ways that reflect the country's social and cultural diversity (Lemos 2009; Recuero 2009a). Commentary on favela-related communities on Orkut dates back over five years (see for example Viva Favela 2005; Recuero 2007), and the larger geographically oriented Orkut

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[199] See also Tsavkko Garcia (2010). Other content events strongly influenced by popular culture have included the 'Yes we créu' expression widely used on Twitter and other platforms when Rio was awarded the Olympic Games, which combined parody of US president Barack Obama's 'Yes, we can' slogan with a reference from Brazilian *funk* music (Martins 2009), and the #gentediferenciada protest against the moving of a planned metro station out of an upmarket neighbourhood of São Paulo (iG São Paulo 2011).

[200] Recent research on Twitter in Brazil also highlighted its popularity for sharing information (Recuero & Zago 2011: 75).

[201] Not long after it was first launched in 2004, Orkut was the site of conflicts between English speaking users from the US and Portuguese speakers from Brazil. See Fragoso (2006).

[202] '*favelização*'

[203] 'anti-digital inclusion internet users'

[204] Similar points have been made by Scalco (2009).

communities I looked at in the exploratory phase of my research were mostly set up in 2004 or 2005.[205]

Although my own research does not look directly at Orkut, it was amongst the tools used by the content creators who participated in my research for disseminating and promoting their content, and thus formed part of the communicative ecology of local content which I explored. As I outlined in my methodology chapter, Orkut was also an important entry point for the construction of my networked field site, but overall my research focused primarily on blogs, with an awareness of a broader communicative ecology of local content. This reflected my observation, in the early stages of the research, that blogs were the main site for more self-reflexive representations of place, with an awareness of a potential external audience. To my knowledge, there have not yet been any studies directly of blogging by residents of favelas or other periphery neighbourhoods. Researchers have looked at representations of favelas on blogs, but the bloggers in question were foreign tourists visiting Rocinha (as well as Soweto in South Africa) and then posting about the experience on their travel blogs (Freire-Medeiros et al 2008; Freire-Medeiros 2011). Indeed, studies of blogging by marginalised urban groups worldwide remain rare, and rarer still when the focus is on everyday uses of blogs rather than projects which incorporate blogging as part of their activities. One notable exception is Nabil Echchaibi's (2009) study of *Bondy Blog* and its publication of content about a Paris *banlieue*, although the blog in question began life as a journalistic project before being handed over to residents of the *banlieue* in question. However, Echchaibi's (2009: 26) call for more research on what he calls 'small blogs', by which he means less well-known blogs, is very much relevant to my own study.

A theme of Brazilian research on blogs has been attention to collective or group blogs. McCann (2008: 138-140) mentions the importance of such blogs in Brazil, citing the example of Overmundo,[206] a collaborative cultural website which places a particular emphasis on cultural practices and productions overlooked by the mainstream media. Adriana Braga's (2008) research, mentioned in the methodology chapter, considered a collective blog about motherhood (Mothern) and the communicative circuit around it. Niche blogs or blogging circuits have also been the focus of research. For example, Ramos and Paiva (2009) have investigated the use of blogs by members of the different Brazilian police forces. Carlsen (2009) has looked at the new famous case of a Brazilian sex worker, Bruna Surfistinha, who

[205] The importance of place and territorial identity in Orkut communities has been explored by Fragoso (2008).
[206] One of Overmundo's founders was Hermano Vianna, who has been mentioned several times in this chapter.

became a celebrity as a result of her blog and went on to publish a print memoir. An e-book on blog research edited by Brazilian scholars (Amaral, Recuero & Montardo 2009) included chapters on political and journalistic blogs in the country. Blogs are also mentioned as an important form of dissemination for marginal literature authors in São Paulo by Érica Peçanha do Nascimento (2009), and Brazilian literary and cultural studies scholar Heloísa Buarque de Hollanda has observed that the use of blogs by authors from the urban periphery for 'an intensive dissemination' of their work,[207] based on an urgent need for visibility, contrasts with that of middle-class writers who tend to use blogs to publish texts that will later become books (a cultura na era digital 2009). Finally, Zanetti (2010a) also mentions the important role of blogs for publicity and dissemination in the periphery cinema circuit in Brazil.

My own research focused on the use of blogs (alongside other platforms and channels) by three individuals from a particular Rio de Janeiro favela, for the publication and dissemination of local content. The favela in question was Complexo da Maré, and the final section in this chapter therefore provides a brief introduction to the area, outlining basic characteristics and issues relevant to its representation by outsiders and by local residents.

Introducing Complexo da Maré[208]

The area known as Complexo da Maré is situated in northern Rio de Janeiro, bordering Guanabara Bay and close to three important expressways (the Avenida Brasil, the Linha Vermelha and the Linha Amarela) that connect different parts of the city to each other, as well as linking to the international airport and major routes in and out of the city. It is also near the Fundação Oswaldo Cruz, a major public health research institute, and the Ilha do Fundão campus of the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro (UFRJ). These different features of its location make Maré a particularly visible favela in Rio (Redes de Desenvolvimento da Maré n.d.a). Maré was historically known for its *palafitas* (houses built on stilts over water)[209] and this is another factor which contributed to a widespread perception of Maré as a poor area (Redes de Desenvolvimento da Maré, n.d.a), although today its visibility has perhaps

207 '*uma divulgação intensiva*'

208 This description is based on information provided on different websites (particularly the website of the NGO Redes de Desenvolvimento da Maré) and in different publications (including Pandolfi & Grynzspan 2003: 15-17), as well as my own observations. Where a particularly distinctive piece of information is included, the source will be provided.

209 This is probably the source of the area's name, which means 'tide'.

more to do with issues around public security, making it 'one of the most stigmatised *espaços populares* in the city' (Souza e Silva et al 2009: 11).[210] Maré is home to a military police batallion, as well as militias and different drug factions, the latter meaning that areas of its territory can be the subject of tense disputes. This symbolic visibility (Redes de Desenvolvimento da Maré n.d.b) is also reflected in Maré's appearance in mainstream cultural representations. It was mentioned in the 1986 song *Alagados* by the band Paralamas do Sucesso, the lyrics of which were used in the sidebar of the blog I discuss in chapter 5. More recently, the 2007 film *Maré, nossa história de amor* [*Another Love Story*] directed by Lúcia Murat was set in the area and is described on the Internet Movie Database as a '[f]ree adaptation of the tragedy of Romeo and Juliet translated to the harsh life in Favela da Maré, one of largest and most violent slums in Rio de Janeiro' (IMDb n.d.).

Unlike many well-known favelas which are located on hills, particularly those in the southern area of the city, Maré is largely flat with one or two exceptions. The area, which was officially recognised as a formal neighbourhood, or '*bairro*', in 1994, is made up of 16 different communities which came into existence at different stages in its history, beginning with the arrival of the first residents in the area known as Morro do Timbau in the 1940s.[211] The ongoing occupation of the area was influenced by the opening of the Avenida Brasil in the mid 1940s (accompanied by the development of industry), the policy of favela erradication promoted by Rio state governor Carlos Lacerda in the 1960s (meaning that residents evicted from favelas in southern Rio were transferred to parts of Maré), as well as the broader trend of rural to urban migration which took place in Brazil in the second half of the twentieth century (Pandolfi & Grynzspan 2003: 16; Redes de Desenvolvimento da Maré n.d.a).[212] The area's *palafitas* were erradicated by a programme of favela urbanisation known as Projeto Rio at the end of the 1970s (Pandolfi & Grynzspan 2003: 16; Perlman 2010: 272). A reconstruction of a *palafita* house can still be seen at the Museu da Maré, one of only a

[210] '*um dos espaços populares mais estigmatizados da cidade*'. Note that it is difficult to translate the term *espaços populares* into English. 'Popular spaces' does not necessarily convey the class dimension implied in the Portuguese, and the term 'working-class' does not work as well in the Brazilian context. 'Low-income areas' is one possibility, although this masks the real income variation in such spaces.

[211] The full list of individual areas that make up Maré is as follows: Baixa do Sapateiro, Bento Ribeiro Dantas, Conjunto Esperança, Conjunto Pinheiros, Conjunto Marcílio Dias, Morro do Timbau, Nova Holanda, Nova Maré, Parque Maré, Parque União, Praia de Ramos, Roquete Pinto, Rubens Vaz, Salsa e Merengue, Vila do João and Vila Pinheiros.

[212] After World War II, Brazil saw mass migration from the countryside to urban areas, particularly from the north and north-east to the south and south-east. Those from the north-east headed largely for the metropolitan areas of Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo. The country's urban population has grown from around 30% at the beginning of the 1950s to over 80% today (Velho 2008: 11).

handful of museums located within Rio's favelas.

Figures from 2001, from the local census conducted by the NGO CEASM, showed that 132,000 people were living in the Complexo da Maré at that time (Redes de Desenvolvimento da Maré n.d.a), making it one of the largest favela complexes in Rio.[213] Maré is the only favela to have conducted its own census, and the second edition has been underway during 2010 and 2011, coordinated by local NGO Redes de Desenvolvimento da Maré in partnership with the Observatório de Favelas, and supported by the Instituto Pereira Passos and ActionAid (Redes de Desenvolvimento da Maré n.d.c). Most areas of Maré are supplied with water and electricity, are connected up to the sewage system and have regular rubbish collection. The majority of streets in the area are also paved. The area has public schools and health centres (although these are generally considered to be inadequate or insufficient for the population) and a sports complex, but no post offices or banks. There is vibrant commercial activity in many areas of Maré with a weekly street market as well as a range of shops and businesses offering different services and products, including *lan houses*, video rental shops, hairdressers and beauty salons, grocery stores, pharmacies, bakeries, clothes and shoe shops, bars, snackbars and small restaurants.[214] The area's reputation as a centre of north-eastern Brazilian culture (Redes de Desenvolvimento da Maré n.d.) is reflected both in this commerce and in social and cultural activities taking place in the area, such as *forró* parties.[215] Maré also has a samba school and a carnival band, as well as music and party venues hosting rock bands and *baile funk* among other musical styles. There are also many churches of different denominations.

Maré is an area that has given rise to influential NGOs with an interest in the representation of favelas both by their residents and by the media, notably the Observatório de Favelas which was mentioned earlier in the section on internet projects producing content about favelas. A community television station, TV Maré, was set up in the area in 1989, considered to be one of the first such initiatives in the city, and a radio station called Radio Maré was also established in 1995 (Pandolfi & Grynzspan 2003: 16). Today, the area has two community-run newspapers, *O Cidadão* and *Maré de Notícias*. There are also at least two

[213] As an illustration of the discrepancies between the national census and the local census, preliminary figures from the former (cited in Boghossian et al 2011) suggest Maré had a population of 129,700 habitants in 2010, which was 14% higher than the official figure for 2000 (but is lower than the local census figure for 2000). The national census shows Maré to be the neighbourhood with the ninth largest population in the city of Rio. Souza e Silva et al. (2009: 11) give an updated figure of 140,000 as an estimate of the current size of Maré's population.

[214] Many of these were mapped by the Wikimapa project mentioned earlier in the chapter.

[215] *Forró* is a type of music typical of the Brazilian north-east and is discussed in a little more detail in chapter 6.

pré-vestibular courses run by NGOs in Maré to prepare people for university entrance exams.[216] As this brief description has shown, Maré is an important favela in Rio for a number of reasons, including its geographical location and visibility, and the many different, and diverse, activities, which take place there.

Conclusion

This chapter has brought together a discussion of mainstream representations of favelas, favela residents' self-representation via projects and independent cultural initiatives, and finally the role played by digital technologies and particularly web 2.0 in opening up the possibility of local content creation on the internet to a broader proportion of Brazilian favela residents. However, while territorial stigmatisation of favelas and their residents by outsiders may in some cases be giving way to an affirmation of those territories from within, I have also suggested that the availability of more diverse user-generated content about and from favelas on the internet and elsewhere has not completely overturned entrenched hierarchies and inequalities in Brazil, particularly those that relate to how favelas are portrayed and approached in the media, in research, in policy and in everyday social interactions. I have therefore sought to provide a balanced account of the opportunities and appropriations associated with the country's innovative, dynamic and creative digital culture. I have reviewed existing research on Brazilian digital culture that intersects with the topic of local content creation by residents of favelas and urban periphery groups, and have shown how my own work on blogging contributes to an emerging area of scholarship that more accurately captures the diversity of contexts of internet use which exist in Brazil. My brief introduction to the Complexo da Maré favela at the end of the chapter has set the scene for the following three chapters, which will present detailed case studies of how three local residents are using the internet to put forward their own representations of the area and in the process, to counter those accounts which marginalise, stigmatise and homogenise it.

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[216] These courses prepare students for the competitive entrance exams to public (federal and state-run) universities in Brazil. Many NGOs and other organisations (including universities themselves) offer free or low-cost *pré-vestibular comunitário* courses, as an alternative to those run by the private sector, for students with lower incomes or those resident in specific areas.

Chapter 4: Following a travelling text: Embeddedness and mobility

Introduction

This chapter considers the publication and circulation of a text by a resident of Maré, which was first posted on a group blog without a local geographical focus. The text in question, entitled *Terra Boa*,[217] was a personal response to a conflict between rival groups of drug traffickers which took place in part of Maré during my research, lasting for almost six months and resulting in deaths and injuries as well as severe disruption to the everyday life of local residents. The mobility of this text, which I term a 'travelling text', resulted from a combination of the intentions and efforts of its author, who explicitly sought to give it non-local visibility, and the actions of other internet users, including friends of the author who mobilised in support of its dissemination. I combine close analysis of the text itself (including its visual aspects) with an examination of how it travelled beyond its original context through reposting on other blogs and websites and dissemination on different internet platforms and in print.

Given my focus on the locality of internet content, in this chapter I consider how the locality and embeddedness of this text were influenced by its mobility and the transformations it underwent as a result, such as differences in how its authorship was attributed, variations in the image that accompanied the text and in its title, and small modifications to the text itself. I suggest that the locality and embeddedness of a text may be affected by its reposting, whether the blogs or sites where it appears have an explicitly place-based focus, or rather relate to particular interest groups or thematic areas, thereby evidencing other types of locality which are manifested on the internet. That said, it is my contention that a travelling text may also remain strongly embedded in a particular context, whether place-based or otherwise, through the author's choice of language, regardless of what happens to its framing and, to a certain extent, content – and regardless of where it is published. Nonetheless, there may still be a 'desituating' effect when individual blog entries are 'plucked out of their original context and exposed to radically different forums' (Viégas 2005: n.p.).[218]

In considering such effects, my analysis of the text and content event presented in this

[217] *Good Land*. In this empirical chapter and the two which follow it, I give citations from internet content in the original Portuguese in the body of the text, and provide an English translation in a footnote.

[218] Viégas develops this concept drawing on the work of Grudin (2001 cited in Viégas 2005).

chapter builds on an observation made by Ken Maclean (2009: 866), namely that 'digital objects [...] are affected by the spaces through which they move'. Maclean (2009: 866) notes that 'surprisingly little attention has been directed at how digital objects travel [...] or the problem multiple and slightly different copies of the same "original" pose for those interested in determining the provenance of a particular electronic item'.[219] In seeking to develop his own approach to this type of empirical material,[220] Maclean makes three key points about reposting which are of relevance to the discussion here. He suggests firstly that the availability of a digital object in different locations increases the likelihood of it taking on unintended meanings, secondly that the non-random and strategic nature of reposting means that digital objects build up 'biographies' as they travel,[221] and finally that reposting leads to the emergence of 'interpretive communities' to debate digital objects' authenticity and the significance of their trajectories. As Castells (2007: 247) reminds us, 'any post in the Internet, regardless of the intention of its author, becomes a bottle drifting in the ocean of global communication, a message susceptible of being received and reprocessed in unexpected ways'. In considering the reposting of *Terra Boa*, I combine Maclean's three-pronged approach with observations from Blommaert (2008) on what can happen to the voice of grassroots texts when they travel beyond their original local contexts. To capture the different ways this post was reprocessed as it travelled, I also approach it as an example of a 'fluid text', as set down in chapter 2, in which material changes to the text provide a window onto writing and editorial practices.

The chapter begins with an overview of the issues raised by the translocal mobility and visibility of local content on the internet. It then introduces the text at the heart of the chapter, *Terra Boa*, and describes the content event that developed around it, followed by a brief note on methodology. The focus then shifts to a detailed discussion of how the text expresses its territorial embeddedness, at the same time as it places a localised conflict in a wider, translocal, context. The following section looks specifically at the language used in the text, linking this to work on the use and reception of favela slang. After this, the chapter considers

[219] One related area of research is the emerging body of work on virality in internet content, which has so far focused on large-scale reposting of YouTube videos, or virality in political campaigns. Work specifically about virality involving blogs includes Nahon et al (2011) and Walsten (2010). There is less work exploring the smaller-scale reposting of mainly textual content that is my focus here, although scholars have begun to examine 'retweeting' practices on Twitter (boyd, Golder & Lotan 2010; Recuero & Zago 2011).

[220] Maclean examines digital archives relating to a conflict about territorial boundaries between Vietnam and China and how Vietnamese internet users were involved in debating and exchanging information about the issue, while the government made efforts to suppress this.

[221] Here Maclean draws on Igor Kopytoff's (1986: cited in Maclean 2009: 866) work on the cultural biography of things.

the text's engagement with media coverage of the conflict and of favelas more broadly speaking, drawing on literature about the relationship between blogs and mainstream news content as well as citizens' media, and examining *Terra Boa*'s self-reflexive foregrounding of the act of representation. Finally, the chapter provides a fluid text analysis of this text, considering visual and textual transformations associated with its mobility as well as the effects on authorship, concluding with a discussion of the unintended meanings attached to the text as it travelled.

The implications of translocal content mobility and visibility on the internet

Unlike spoken communication, which is largely ephemeral and local, 'texts are mobile, and so available outside the immediate circumstances in which they are produced' (Hine 2000: 50). As Barton and Papen (2010: 13) have pointed out, '[w]ritten documents are constantly being reused and recontextualized and they move between physical places and social spaces'. For example, Barton and Hamilton, who studied literacy practices in Lancaster in northern England, noted that despite the temptation to assume the unwaveringly local nature of vernacular texts, they came across the same texts in different places, observing that they circulated 'in similar ways to jokes and urban myths' (1998: 258). Indeed, mobility is a characteristic of any text (Barber 2007: 22-29), although textual mobility beyond the local may increase with globalisation (Blommaert 2008: 23-24) and particularly with the internet.

The contemporary 'networked media' context in which such mobility takes place is discussed by danah boyd [sic] (2008), who proposes four key characteristics of the environment in which ordinary people now consume and produce content on the internet.[222] These are: persistence (content is automatically recorded and archived), replicability (content can be copied and reproduced), scaleability (content has a high potential level of visibility), and searchability (content can be found via search engines) (boyd 2008: 27). boyd (2008: 31; emphasis in original) emphasises that scaleability 'is about the *possibility* of tremendous visibility, not the guarantee of it', linking this assertion to Chris Anderson's idea of the 'long tail' (Anderson 2006 cited in boyd 2008: 31), whereby a large number of internet content creators gain only small-scale, localised visibility. She also draws attention to the role of sociopolitical factors as well as the intentionality of the collective (rather than the individual

[222] While boyd's work is U.S.-focused, these general characteristics are more widely applicable, particularly as they focus on the technical or structural features of networked publics.

content creator) in determining what content is scaled and given greater visibility (boyd 2008: 32-33). However, the way that scaleability is intertwined with and codependent on the persistence, replicability and searchability of networked media also contributes to the potential visibility of content (boyd 2008: 26). In fact, I understand the potential visibility of local content on the internet as fundamentally implying *non-local* or translocal visibility, and although the emphasis here is on the local as primarily place-based, this argument could also be applied to non-place based localities constructed and experienced via the internet.

It is thus the characteristics of the internet and associated user practices that give a text such as *Terra Boa* its mobility and visibility. These same characteristics in turn inspire or awaken the desire to try to follow it, as well as offering content creators and researchers some tools which can be used for this purpose. However, Blommaert has suggested that despite their increased mobility, local (or grassroots) texts do not travel well, arguing that such '[t]exts are often only *locally* meaningful and valuable. As soon as they move to other geographical and/or social spaces, they lose "voice"' (2008: 7; emphasis in original). Whilst this somewhat pessimistic conclusion may reflect the fact that Blommaert studied handwritten texts rather than internet content (whose authors may more consciously negotiate the potential of translocal visibility, often implicit from the moment of publication), his words provide a useful reminder that despite the increased availability of user-generated content on the internet, including local content, there can be complex issues involved in broadening the visibility and accessibility of local issues and concerns in this way. This is particularly the case when the content in question is published by individuals rather than collective projects or initiatives backed by institutions. The work of Blommaert and Maclean forms the foundation of my conceptual framework for approaching travelling texts, such as *Terra Boa*, and I return to the implications of their thinking later in the chapter. In the following section, I introduce *Terra Boa* and the content event generated by its publication and circulation, showing how I identified and tracked this text using the 'following the content' method outlined in chapter 2.

The content event around *Terra Boa* – An overview

After I had spent several months monitoring and exploring relevant sites of local content originating from residents of Maré, as well as coverage of the area by newspapers and other mainstream media organisations, I noticed an upsurge in media reports relating to the area. This coverage reported on an invasion of one part of the favela by a group of drug traffickers from another area and the resulting conflict, and seemed to follow the characteristic pattern

(Ramos & Paiva 2007), focusing on shoot-outs, deaths and injuries, police operations, school closures, buses set on fire, and so on.[223] However, after two and a half months, a resident's perspective also surfaced via the internet. A short message about the impact of the conflict on the lives of residents was posted in the forum of a local Orkut community, with a link to an external post on a group blog (itself without a particular geographical focus). The post, written by one of the authors of the blog under a pseudonym,[224] began with a large photograph by a local photographer[225] showing an area of Maré.

A short overview of the text is useful at this point, although more in-depth analysis is provided in later sections of the chapter. The text is written in the first person, and is framed by affirmations of its author's roots in the favela. It touches on his personal experience of the conflict – not seeing his family for a period, keeping in touch with the latest news on his mobile phone, the death of people he knew – as well as broader aspects of life as a favela resident. It incorporates wide-ranging references, including to the drug traffickers, the police, and the media, as well as federal government poverty-alleviation programmes and the Rio de Janeiro state government's UPP policy. As I show in my analysis later in the chapter, the blog post is rich in its use of language, and this is one of the ways its author, whom I will call J., seeks to territorially embed the text.

The day before J. wrote his text, he had been unable to get home from his workplace outside of the favela due to gunfire, despite waiting and trying until the small hours of the morning. He wrote the text as a way of getting things off his chest (a '*desabafo*'), revolted by what he saw as a lack of interest from the mainstream media in what was going on in his area. He did not originally write the text for publication on the internet, but circulated it by email to some of his friends, including a discussion list linked to one of the many different collectives and groups he participates in. Those who read the text encouraged him to share it more widely, and having distanced himself from the text a little, he also saw its potential, so he decided to post it on the blog he maintained with friends mainly from the suburbs of Rio. There, the text was read by many people – J. cited a figure of 2000 hits in a single day. As a result of the interest, he continued to disseminate the text via different networks or groups to which he had a connection, publishing it on a further four sites, as well as in the forums of Orkut

[223] Most of the relevant media coverage was collected from the online and print editions of the *O Dia*, *Extra*, *Meia Hora* and *O Globo* newspapers, all Rio-based, as well as the *G1* and *Terra* internet news portals. The conflict was also covered in the *Estado de São Paulo*.

[224] Pseudonyms were used by all authors on the group blog in question.

[225] Information provided by the author of the text. No caption or credit was supplied for the image.

communities, including those with a place-based focus. At the same time, J.'s friends also distributed the text via their networks. As this account implies, J. had good access to the internet, as well as the experience and skills to use it creatively, and is also what one could call 'well-networked' through his different personal and professional activities. Overall, aside from its original publication by J. on the group blog, the text was also linked and reposted on at least ten other websites or blogs during my research. J. also reported that after he posted the link to the text on his Twitter account, it was 'retweeted' (or forwarded on) by some of those following his activity on the platform.[226] Finally, the text also appeared in print in two zines as well as later in a book. In the process of this mobility, some aspects of the text underwent changes or were omitted.

Less than two full days after its publication on the group blog, the post containing this text had already received twelve comments,[227] including two by the original author, and overall it received over thirty comments and three trackbacks.[228] In other words, it was a text which prompted engagement and response by readers; the text also received additional comments when reposted on other sites. In fact, the trackbacks on the original blog post represent only part of the sites where the text was later reposted – and so this was not a reliable means of locating instances of the text and needed to be augmented by using a search engine, bearing in mind the caveats about this method noted in chapter 2. As mentioned above, *Terra Boa* was also disseminated and linked using social network sites, and additionally, published in two printed zines linked to the cultural scene in and around Rio de Janeiro. Some copies of one of the zines were in turn taken and distributed locally in the favela by the author. More than a year after its original appearance on the internet, the text was also included in a book linked to a film about favelas which the author of this text helped to make, having previously also been published on the film's blog. Hine (2000: 155) has suggested that researchers should pay attention to how internet content may be transformed as its moves from online to offline contexts, and this can be considered another dimension of how a text may travel, with implications for its meaning and reach. However, we should not overlook the fact that there is also often an earlier flow or movement in the opposite direction, from an offline situation or

[226] boyd, Golder & Lotan (2010: 1) argue that retweeting 'can be understood both as a form of information diffusion and as a means of participating in a diffuse conversation. Spreading tweets is not simply to get messages out to new audiences, but also to validate and engage with others'.

[227] I do not include these comments in my analysis. See the methodological discussion in the next section of this chapter.

[228] Two of the trackbacks were from blogs where the original author reposted the text. Trackback is a function in the blogging platform used (Wordpress), which provides an automatic notification when another blog on the same platform links to the text.

event to its representation in internet content, as can clearly be seen in the case study being presented here. In other words, content such as the text being discussed here is not 'just' content, and the event did not begin with the publication of the text on the internet. The text is a representation of lived experience, which is in itself relevant to the analysis of the content and the event surrounding it. Bearing in mind the broader characteristics of this 'content event', which involved multiple appearances of the same text in different locations, sometimes with small variations, some additional attention to methodology is required, before beginning the analysis of the text at its heart.

Methodological note

Focusing on a single blog post (multiplied through its republication on other blogs and elsewhere), as I do here, is not without its challenges. Blogs are dynamic, open-ended publication sites, constantly changing and expanding not only within themselves, as new posts and comments are added and design changes and other additions made, but also as a result of content published and linked by users on other blogs and other digital media platforms. Himmer has warned of the risks of detaching posts from blogs in this way:

> Whatever particular fragment [of a blog] is torn from its context for commoditization or display necessarily and insistently refers to its own incompletion, via links to earlier pieces and other sites, or references to information about the topic or author contained in an earlier post or other sites, or references about the topic or author contained in an earlier post or prompted to appear in a later one [...] That potential for and insistence on alteration and recreation cannot be contained in a single, discrete fragment divorced from the whole—as would rapidly become clear to anyone reading a single typical post without access to the larger weblog. (2004: n.p.)

Nonetheless, given that the post I focus on was republished in a variety of locations, both on the internet and in print, with varying levels of information about its source, my interest lies precisely in examining what happened to the text as a result and what practices were involved. Another scholar who analysed screenshots of a blog and a social network site profile recognised that while she had 'translated' the original texts 'into a more static form for preservation and analysis', the 'textual artefacts' that resulted were 'compelling' (Carrington 2009: 7). Rather than the relationship between a text and its original publication site,[229] I am concerned with the way a single text (or blog post) may be considered local content in itself, regardless of where it is published, and how the mobility of a text through reposting and dissemination, and the resulting transformations it undergoes, may affect its locality. My aim

[229] Note however that I did follow the group blog where *Terra Boa* was published for a time, paying particular attention to other texts published there by the author of this text, and also discussed some of the practices associated with this group blog with him in interviews.

is to examine whether there really is a 'desituating' effect (Viégas 2005: n.p.) when a blog post is reposted. With this in mind, I attempt to combine an analysis of a single text or blog post, as a representation of aspects of favela life by a resident, with a discussion of the practices involved in its publication and circulation on the internet by its author and, indirectly, others who became involved in this content event.

Fieldwork on this content event thus involved following the text as it travelled between different sites on the internet, combined with close attention to its form and content and the different ways it was framed in reposting and dissemination. Contact was established with the author, J., with whom the text was discussed in online and face-to-face interviews, which also touched on related issues and his content creation activities more generally. It is worth clarifying, however, that it was not possible literally to follow the text everywhere that it travelled. Firstly, it would be challenging to track its every 'movement' – like any reader, I have my own trajectory in this event, with my own starting (and finishing) point, and aspects of the event remained invisible to me. My analysis is thus inevitably partial. Secondly, I was only able to access some aspects of the event via the author's account, and the material he made available to me, in retrospect. This particularly applies to the offline and interpersonal dissemination and discussion of the text. As I explained in the methodology chapter, my overall approach in this research was inspired by Burrell's idea of a networked field site, in which the researcher both follows movement and remains in place, intercepting flows, and recognises that there are some spaces which it is not possible to visit in person, and this is reflected in how I engaged with the text and content event discussed in this chapter.

As I noted in chapter 2, this text and the event around it raised particular methodological issues relating to consent, due to the involvement of different people in its publication and dissemination. As well as negotiating J.'s consent to include his text in my research, I also checked with him that the other members of the group blog where he originally published the text were aware of my research project and my interest in the text. I was less sure how to proceed in relation to the reposted versions of the text. Whilst J. himself was responsible for some instances of reposting, other content creators had also been involved. I decided that I would not seek consent where the site of the reposting was the web presence of an institution, project or public figure. Where the text was reposted on blogs that appeared to attract a more limited readership, however, I did attempt to seek consent. I secured this in

one case, but did not hear back from the people behind another blog I contacted about this.[230]

The following section of the chapter takes a closer look at the actual text of the post on the blog where it was first posted by J., discussing how it communicated its territorial embeddedness whilst also drawing attention to translocal aspects of the conflict it covered.

The text: Place and embedding

Place is emphasised from the outset in J.'s text as it appeared in its original form on the group blog, both visually and textually. It is referenced in the title, *Terra Boa*, in the large colour photograph of part of the favela which preceded the body of the post, and in the opening sentences which affirm belonging and rootedness: '*Eu sou da Maré. Nascido na Maré.*'[231] While Cecchetto and Farias (2009: 228) emphasise that one's place of residence operates as a powerful means of social classification in Rio de Janeiro, this text begins with the 'territorial affirmation' discussed in previous chapters, which is also present, for example, in the lyrics of funk music which often refer to specific favelas and locations within them. Maré is referenced several other times in the text, and its final line mentions the name of one of the individual favelas which make up the overall complex, recalling the discussion of favela subareas in chapter 3: '*E ó, avisa pra geral: aqui é o cria do Pinheiro!*'[232] The narrative is therefore strongly territorially embedded from the outset, through the author's choice of words and imagery. It is also framed by assertions of its authenticity, via the presentation of its author's credentials for writing about the place in question, and the referencing of different contexts of geographical locality and different identities. This is an example of how territorially embedded content can function as self-conscious expression of the territorial embeddedness of its creator.

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[230] Another methodological and ethical issue related to consent for the inclusion of the comments attracted by this text in my research. I investigated the feasibility of securing the consent of the people who had posted the comments, since I believed that the comments constituted a potentially important dimension of the content event. However, not all commenters had supplied information (such as a hyperlink to their own web presence or email address), and some had posted under nicknames or pseudonyms. This meant that even if I had tried, I would only potentially have been able to contact some of them. My deliberation on this matter ended when the blog where J.'s text was originally published disappeared for a while. Although I had a screenshot showing the comments, it did not give access to the hyperlinked contact information.

[231] 'I'm from Maré. Born in Maré.'

[232] 'And hey, tell everyone that it's the Pinheiro native here!' '*Cria*' is a Brazilian term for someone who is born in or comes from a certain place (source: Michaelis online Portuguese-English dictionary). Note that this sentence is analysed in more detail later in the chapter, as it was altered in several of the reposted or republished versions of the text.

The author of this text also refers to himself using a broader place-based metaphor in the opening paragraph ('*Sou ponto turístico*'),[233] to describe the curiosity that is awakened when he tells people where he is from, thereby alluding to the sensationalist or inadequate nature of existing information available to non-residents about these neighbourhoods, both generic (favelas in general) and specific (the favela he comes from). The same theme of tourism recurs, in a more literal way, when the author includes a quote from the female commander in charge of the community police force in the Santa Marta favela, located in the Rio neighbourhood of Botafogo:

> 'Eles (moradores) olhavam assustados para aquelas pessoas, que nunca estiveram ali, mas logo entenderam que estavam ali para conhecer o êxito do projeto que pacificou uma comunidade que era dominada pela violência do tráfico. Foi mais uma demonstração de atenção. Ficaram felizes, já que não são mais tratados como bichos ou pessoas à margem da sociedade', *explica a capitã Pricilla de Oliveira, comandante da Companhia de Policiamento Comunitário do Santa Marta.*[234]

As noted in chapter 3, Santa Marta was the first site for the implementation of the Rio state government's UPP policy, begun at the end of 2008. Although the source of the quote is not provided within the text (and no hyperlink is given), it was possible to establish via a search engine that it came from an article on *TV Globo*'s *G1* news portal which reported how foreign and Brazilian upper middle-class tourists had begun to visit Santa Marta since the establishment of the UPP (Freire 2009). This use of intertextuality – the incorporation of existing sources and their re-signification in new contexts[235] – is significant because it represents one way that the author draws critical attention to how favelas and their residents are often viewed by policymakers, law-enforcers and the media in Rio de Janeiro, and non-residents in general, given the somewhat patronising tone of the declaration, in which the police commander speaks for local residents. Later on, the text being discussed here also presents direct critique of the UPP approach, pointing to the fall-out in unoccupied areas of the city: '*Mal sabem eles que os traficantes dessas regiões ocupadas não foram arrebatados*

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[233] 'I'm a tourist attraction.' There is a burgeoning literature on favela tourism and associated representation of favelas (e.g. Jaguaribe & Hetherington 2004; Williams 2008; Freire-Medeiros 2009, 2011), which is indeed a reality in several favelas in Rio de Janeiro, but not the area where this author lives. The tone is ironic here, since tourist perspectives and representations tend to exoticise favelas and their residents.

[234] '*They (the residents) looked anxiously at those people, who had never been there before, but they soon understood that they were there to see the achievements of the project which pacified a community previously dominated by the violence of the drugs trade. It was yet another sign of attention. They were pleased, since they are no longer treated as animals or people on the margins of society,*' explains Captain Pricilla de Oliveira, Commander of the Santa Marta Community Police Force. [italics in the original]

[235] Allen (2000: 29) argues that 'intertextuality reminds us that all texts are potentially plural, reversible, open to the reader's own presuppositions, lacking in clear and defined boundaries, and always involved in the expression or repression of the dialogic "voices" which exist within society'. For Carrington (2009: 10), blogs 'use high levels of explicit intertextuality, enabled by the technology, to construct dynamic and non-linear ensembles that draw on a pastiche of other sites and texts.'

por Deus. Estão fortalecendo outras favelas e tocando o terror em outros pontos da cidade.[236]

The author of the text also emphasises his own humanity and refers by name to local residents who suffered as a result of the violent conflict in his favela:

> *Eu tenho pés, pernas, braços, peito e coração. E ainda tenho que sorrir quando enfrento a multidão. Também sinto saudades, tais como da Joana que morreu após um tiro matar sua única filha chamada Esperança.*[237]

However, the text's references to place also go beyond this particular favela and other favelas in Rio de Janeiro, making global connections. Towards the end of his text, J. refers to the difficulties faced by favela residents in developing any kind of protest in a situation of conflict such as the one taking place in his neighbourhood. He likens this to other well-known situations of conflict and repression from recent history:

> *E o povo grita, suplica, tenta se organizar. A repressão bate na porta. Mas prometemos que não vamos recuar. Resistiremos. Tipo Romênia. Tipo Colômbia. E que caiam por terra todos os dominadores deste tempo! Por um complexo da Maré livre!*[238]

Whilst the connection between the author's favela and Romania and Colombia is not made explicit, fieldwork provided one clue regarding the inclusion of Romania in the text. The author told me about a documentary which he had been involved in showing through his work in audiovisual capacity-building, which presented video footage filmed by ordinary people during the Romanian revolution.

Overall, however, the main focus of the text remains the local context where the conflict unfolded, in a specific Rio de Janeiro favela. As this section has shown, the blog post incorporated different clues that its author really came from the place he was writing about. These included its language and style, which will be discussed in more detail in the next section. However, despite its territorial affirmation, and references to local people, the overview provided also illustrates how these local references in the text were interspersed with others which transcended the local dimension of the conflict being represented, such as mention of state government policy, the media, and the invocation of popular resistance in other countries. In this way, the author seeks to place a localised conflict into a wider context,

[236] 'Little do they know that the traffickers from the occupied regions have not been carried off by God. They are strengthening the ranks in other favelas and terrorising other areas of the city.'

[237] 'I have feet, legs, arms, a chest and a heart. And on top of that I have to smile when I face the crowds. I also miss people, like Joana who died after a bullet killed her only daughter whose name was Esperança [Hope].'

[238] 'And the people shout, beg, try to get organised. Repression knocks at the door. But we promise that we won't give in. We will resist. Like in Romania. Like in Colombia. Down with all the dominators of our time! For a free Complexo da Maré!'

revealing its translocal nature. I will now look more specifically at the language used in the text, showing how this functioned as a self-conscious means of embedding the text in a particular setting, at the same time as the text remained accessible to a translocal audience.

Local language and (trans)local audiences

Although the choice of vocabulary and the style of language used in this text also served to embed it in place, this embedding was not necessarily in a specific locality or territory, but certainly in the favela, understood as a particular sociocultural context. As Bosco has shown, place, understood as 'open, emotional and networked' may be more important for embeddedness (in social networks) than locality (Bosco 2006: 359). However, it is worth bearing in mind, as outlined in chapter 1, that in the context of the internet and digital communication technologies, locality is also being reconfigured in a similar way to Bosco's 'networked sense of place'.

J. explained to me that he wanted to ensure that he wrote in a way that made it clear he was from the favela, and fluent in the relevant discourses, so that people reading the text in the favela would identify with it. This conscious embedding can be seen, for example, in the use of colloquial terms such as those in the phrase '*avisa pra geral: aqui é o cria do Pinheiro*' mentioned above. Another example is the sentence '*Então deixa os hômi entrar, pacificar, esculachar e depois virar herόri?!*',[239] where '*hômi*', referring to the police, stands in for '*homens*', and '*herόri*' for '*heróis*'. In fact, this use of vocabulary directed towards a particular audience is not unique to this text about a conflict in his own neighbourhood. Reflecting more generally about the content he publishes on the internet, which focuses on different themes reflecting his wide-ranging interests (such as environmental issues, cinema, favelas more broadly), he described how he sometimes chose to direct or target texts to a specific audience (for example, friends or work colleagues) through the use of terms that would only be familiar to them, telling me: '*às vezes eu coloco uma palavra ali, que só os meus amigos vão entender*' (interview, 2 February 2010).[240] Whilst the posts would be available on the internet to whoever chose to read them, they were also strongly localised (whether to a particular place, or to a particular interest group) through the choice of language, as well as

[239] 'So let the men come in, pacify, destroy everything and then become heroes?!'
[240] 'Sometimes I include a word there, that only my friends will understand'.

the use of different dissemination channels for publicising the posts to particular groups of readers.

Another aspect of how the language in this text is embedded in a particular context lies in its use of onomatopoeia. It includes a passage imitating the sound of gunfire, which appears at two different points in the text. The first passage is as follows:

> *Fundo do poço. Quase morro. Comercial.*
> *Tum-tum-tum! Pá! Pum! Pá! Pum! Bláaaa! Bláaaa!*[241]

Closer to the end of the text, the second line cited above, representing the sound of gunfire, is repeated on its own. J. explained to me that he used the term *comercial* to refer to how shooting punctuated life in the favela, as if it were a television ad break, after which regular programming and the normal routine was resumed. Onomatopoeia is thus used as a device to structure the text and emphasize the regularity of gunfire in the favela during the conflict, thereby immersing the reader in the environment being portrayed and creating immediacy. However, there is an additional connection to the use of words mimicking the sound of gunshots in favela slang.

The relationship between language and social and spatial distinctions in Rio de Janeiro has been discussed by Jennifer Roth-Gordon (2009: 62), who draws attention to the existence of slang terms 'that locate [the speaker] in a particular social space and affirm his loyalty to the favela'. These may include both 'very local, in-group forms' and better known slang terms. Although the use of particular terms may be viewed as a potential trigger for discrimination, Roth-Gordon suggests that there are situations in which they are employed to show belonging and, following the terms of the argument being put forward here, (territorial) embeddedness.

Roth-Gordon looks at a particular area of onomatopoeic slang, what she refers to as 'sound words', borrowing a term from Tannen (1983 cited in Roth-Gordon 2009: 62). Roth-Gordon analyses the use of a particular sound word from her fieldwork data, '*bum*', which she notes is similar to the sound of a gunshot. Having first considered the use of the word by favela residents, often for emphasis, she also explores the reaction of middle-class Rio residents to a recording in which this term is used frequently. As she observes, in the understanding of the latter group, 'people who speak with gunshots (*bum*!) are made to represent people who

[241] 'Rock bottom. I almost die. Ad break.
Tum-tum-tum! Pá! Pum! Pá! Pum! Bláaaa! Bláaaa!'

use guns. The term helps construct the scene of a hypothetical crime, in which victim and criminal, citizen and marginal, are linguistically connected' (Roth-Gordon 2009: 64). Roth-Gordon's work thus helps to shed light on the issues around the use and reception of favela slang by different actors and the connections to (self-)representation of favela residents. As suggested above, the author of this text makes use of slang in certain sections of his text as a way of affirming his origins in the favela, and of connecting with a particular audience.

Nonetheless, J. was aware that this might mean that some parts of his text would be harder to understand for people who were not familiar with this (often oral) language,[242] and that this might mean that the overwhelming impression left by the text was one of violence. However, he also felt that the text's capacity to provoke reflection would be accessible to a range of readers:

> *É porque, por exemplo, quem não conhece a linguagem da favela, tem algumas questões ali, que o cara não vai entender muito bem, e aí pode levar até para a esfera da poesia. Mas na verdade eu tô falando com a linguagem da favela né. E aí o cara que leu na favela, que conhece a linguagem, ele já vai entender de uma forma diferente, ele já vai se identificar mais com o texto. Agora uma pessoa que está distante dessa realidade, pode ler o texto com muita poesia, né, como se fosse, como se tivesse floreando a realidade. Mas na verdade eu tô... eu tô falando como... é a linguagem da favela, né, o dia-a-dia, o vocabulário, né. E eu acho que essa é a diferença. E também por questões culturais, né. Por exemplo, um cara que... imagina um nordestino, do sertão lá, que leu o texto, por exemplo. Ele pegou aquilo ali com uma outra propriedade, né, que a vivência dele, ele pode ter feito um diabo do Rio de Janeiro, assim, uma guerra né. Imagina, um cara lá do Maranhão, Rondônia lendo esse texto. Ele deve ter pirado. Deve ter achado que o Rio de Janeiro é violentíssimo. Não sei, visões, né, cada um vai ter a sua. E o texto, ele é muito reflexivo, né. É uma porrada, eu acho assim, puf! Ele te faz pensar. Eu acho que isso vale para todos, independente da onde leu.* (interview, 2 February 2010)[243]

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[242] Despite the conscious embedding of the narrative in place via the use of such slang, the text is not written entirely in this style. For example, it also includes technical language about the weaponry and equipment used by the police who make incursions into the favela, as can be seen in this passage: '*Todos de preto, usam gandola, burucutu, faca na boca, revólver 38, coturno, algemas descartáveis, munições especiais e 6 carregadores de pistolas, fuzil 7,62 mm, coldres táticos, um bastão retrátil e estão prontos para guerrear... Pássaro blindado. Dinossauros do futuro. Mosca morta sem pensar'.* ['All in black, they use overshirts, *burucutus* [a type of hood used to cover one's face], knives in their mouths, 38 revolvers, half-boots, disposable handcuffs, special munitions and 6 cartridge clips, 7.62mm rifles, tactical holsters, a retractable truncheon and they are ready for war... Armoured bird. Dinosaurs of the future. A fly killed without a thought.' As this extract shows, the text also slides easily from such technical language, which emphasises the high level of militarisation of Rio's police, into more lyrical and metaphorical, although ironic, reference to the armoured vehicle they use (described as a bird), the police themselves (dinosaurs) and their victims (flies). Another specialist area of terminology employed in the text comes from documentary film-making, reflecting its author's involvement in this area of activity.

[243] Because, for example, someone who isn't familiar with the language of the favela, there are some questions there, that the guy won't understand very well, and he might even interpret as poetry. But actually I'm using the language of the favela, you know. And so the guy in the favela who read the text, who knows the language, he's going to understand it in a different way, he's going to identify more with the text. Now, a person who is distant from that reality, might read the text as very poetic, you know, as if it were, as if I was embellishing reality. But really I'm... I'm saying... it's the language of the favela, you know, everyday vocabulary. And I think that's the difference. And also for cultural reasons, you know. For example, a guy who.. imagine someone from the north-east, from the *sertão* [interior] there, who read the text, for example. He approached the text with a different character, you know, based on his experience, he might have had an incredible impression of Rio de Janeiro, with, you know, a war. Imagine, a guy from up there in Maranhão, Rondônia, reading this text. He must have gone

In this way, as suggested by Blommaert, the text's embeddedness in a particular local context through language can mean that it may indeed lose voice when it travels to other geographical or social spaces via the internet, or when it is available to readers embedded in other geographical or social spaces. In the above extract, J. makes reference to the idea that 'the language of the favela' in his text might be interpreted as poetry by non-local readers, and this is one of the unintended meanings I discuss in the final section of this chapter, which focuses on the different ways this text was affected by its mobility. In an earlier section on fluid text analysis, I also look at the way certain aspects of J.'s colloquial language underwent small alterations when his text was republished.

This section has sought to illustrate how J. consciously sought to embed his text in different contexts, whether explicitly place-based or otherwise, via his choice of vocabulary and language and his style of writing. The use of an image showing the favela in the blog post also helped to reinforce the specifically territorial embeddedness of the text. The following section will turn to an analysis of the ways *Terra Boa* engaged with the role of the media in covering the conflict and more broadly speaking in developing representations of the favela, given this constituted another important reference for the position adopted in the text.

Foregrounding modes of representation

In chapter 3, I discussed trends in the Brazilian media's representation of favelas, particularly its role in reinforcing negative stereotypes about favelas. Overall the media is a major theme in *Terra Boa*, and is mentioned a number of times. In the main body of the text, its author reflects angrily on the media stereotyping of the favela. He feels that media coverage ignores the narratives and experiences of residents, like him, whose lives are disrupted by the conflict: '*Ouço tudo pelo telefone celular e a midiahipocrisia insiste em enfatizar que a favela é violenta, foda-se quem mora lá. Me dá um* ódio. *Me dê um ópio!*'[244] After the text had been published, its author continued to provide critical commentary on media coverage of the conflict in his contributions to the comments section of his own text, often posting links to

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crazy. He must have thought Rio de Janeiro is a really violent place. I don't know... everybody will have their own interpretation. And the text, it's really reflexive, you know. It's a punch in the face, I think, puf! It makes you think. I think that goes for everyone, regardless of where they read the text.'

[244] 'I hear everything via mobile phone and the media-hypocrisy insists on emphasising that the favela is a violent place, to hell with the people who live there. It fills me with hatred. Hand me some opium!' Note the word opium, which probably refers to the idea of the media as the opium of the people, a variation on Marx's famous comment about religion.

specific articles. For example, a week after the initial publication of the text, he notes that the conflict '*só aparece no G1 quando um PM morre*',[245] and provides an updated figure for the number of deaths so far. While the mainstream media (and particularly Globo) is criticised, it is nonetheless referenced as a source of information, even if that information is then questioned or complemented. The tendency by blogs to link predominantly to mainstream media sources was noted by Melissa Wall (2005) in her research on blogs during the second US war in Iraq; she also points out that whilst bloggers tended not to link to alternative media, they did link to other bloggers. Wall's point about the engagement of bloggers with fragments of news via hyperlinking has echoes in the case study under discussion here:

> Hyperlinks then are important not just as part of a changing story form but in order to help establish credibility. This means that news items from the mainstream media are amplified far beyond their original publication site, as they are seemingly endlessly reproduced by bloggers and through other online media. (2005: 166)

Wall's overall argument is that blogs constitute 'a form of postmodern journalism',

> one that challenges elite information control and questions the legitimacy of mainstream news, that consists not so much of grand narratives as small slices of stories which are seemingly endlessly reproduced. Audiences and producers blur both in creating the blogs and in bringing them to life through an interactive performance between blogger and audience. (2005: 166)

While it is not my intention to engage in a detailed analysis of whether or not a text such as this one constitutes a form of journalism, and how such journalism might be conceptualised, it is certainly important to recognise that content produced by ordinary people and published on the internet can seek to counter perceived gaps or biases in mainstream journalism, or provide a forum for commenting on and contesting journalistic coverage of a particular area. Alongside his repeated citation and linking of mainstream media, the author of this text does also simulate the role of reporter on the conflict in one of his comments, posting a telegraphic (and poetic) update with information presented as coming direct from the lines of battle (and perhaps received via mobile phone, given the mention in the text of using this means of communication to keep in touch with news from the area):

> *Notícias do front,*
> *O tiro come em plena luz do dia.*
> *Mais 2 mortos.*[246]

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[245] 'only shows up on G1 when a military policeman is killed' (this is a reference to the *G1* news website mentioned earlier on).

[246] 'News from the front,
Bullets are flying in broad daylight.
Two more deaths.'

In these different ways, without writing a whole new text, the author is able to use the comments facility to keep his narrative up to date and to follow the latest developments, as well as to link his text to broader contexts.

The author's critique of the mainstream media's position is also evident elsewhere in the comments, where he again uses hyperlinks to directly contrast two stories relating to the conflict, asking why the media has covered one (the setting on fire of a bus) and neglected the other (a protest march against the violence organised by local residents). He also poses the broader question, '*Qual é o interesse da grande mídia nisso tudo?*'[247] However, by linking to coverage of the protest march on a blog maintained by another resident of the favela, in this case the blog I discuss in chapter 6, he highlights the way the internet is being used by local people (like himself) to publish and disseminate content that responds to the perceived gaps or biases in mainstream media coverage of their area. Indeed, J. described to me how the experience of writing and publishing his text had shown him his own potential as a communicator:

> *tive a certeza que eu poderia produzir a midia de onde eu morava*
> *o que acontecia é que eu ficava esperando a guerra sair na globo*
> *quando na verdade eu que deveria ser o porta voz daquilo tudo*
> (online interview, 11 November 2009)[248]

This response to the act of producing and sharing one's own narrative about the area where one lives can be considered in the light of broader commentary about what happens when ordinary people become involved in media production.

Although she does not cover the internet, Clemencia Rodriguez's book on 'citizens' media' makes a number of points which are relevant to the discussion here. In its opening chapter, she describes the far-reaching significance of producing one's own media:

> producing alternative media messages implies much more than simply challenging the mainstream media [...] It implies having the opportunity to create one's own images of self and environment; it implies being able to recodify one's own identity with the signs and codes that one chooses, thereby disrupting the traditional acceptance of those imposed by outside sources; it implies becoming one's own storyteller, regaining one's own voice. (Rodriguez 2001: 3)

Whilst the label 'citizens' media' might usually be associated with projects or more structured and collective initiatives than the text discussed here,[249] Rodriguez (2001: 64) argues that

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247 'What is the mainstream media's interest in all of this?'

248 'i realised that i could produce the media about the place where i live
what happened was that i kept waiting for the war to be covered by globo
when actually i was the one who ought to be the spokesperson about all of that'

'citizens' media come in all shapes', and that attempts at definition 'should focus on the citizens, and their creative intentionality in altering the mediascape, rather than centering on the external and objective forms citizens' media can take' (Rodriguez 2001: 165). However, one common thread Rodriguez (2001: 154) does identify among citizens' media initiatives is a focus on local contexts and the ability to offer a 'unique articulation of the local'. The author of the text under discussion here clearly demonstrates his intention to alter the dominant mediascape in the interview extract cited in the previous paragraph, and also explicitly focuses on a local context, meaning that his text can be considered an example of citizens' media.

Turning now to focus more directly on the implications of the internet for citizens' media, Echchaibi (2009) provides a more recent example of how approaches to journalism are changing in response to new media technologies, and how this can affect journalistic coverage of marginalised urban neighbourhoods. He discusses a participatory journalism experiment in France, initially involving Swiss magazine journalists who used a blog to publish coverage of riots and their aftermath from a base in the Paris suburb of Bondy, and eventually handed the blog over to local residents. Since then, Echchaibi notes,

> the blog has filled an important lacuna in mainstream media coverage of the banlieue by serving as a constant open window. The posts may read less as journalism, but the topics they raise and the people they feature in their articles are unprecedented. (2009: 20-21)

Echchaibi also believes that the blog has 'found in its autonomous platform an empowering tool to break conventional publishing barriers that have historically presented the people of the banlieues from representing themselves to a larger French public' (2009: 23).[250] Although Echchaibi bases his comments on a blog originally set up by journalists rather than ordinary people, there is nonetheless common ground with the text being discussed here.

Such common ground includes the fact that residents of Rio favelas may face similar barriers to self-representation, not least the stigmatisation which results from conventional media coverage of such areas of the city, which I discussed in chapter 3. J. was critical of the themes recurring in such coverage, which he saw as stereotypical and self-interested:

> *a grande midia só vai lá pra dizer o que eles mesmos [...] inventaram**

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[249] Rodriguez presents four case studies which fit with this general tendency, focusing on popular correspondents in Nicaragua, local television in Catalonia, video in Colombia, and Latino radio in the United States.
[250] In their discussion of hyperlocal media organisations in the US, Metzgar et al (2011: 780) note that one obstacle to minority and disadvantaged groups developing their own such initiatives to offer more balanced coverage of their areas and issues, if others do not do so, may be their lack of the necessary skills and resources.

na real eles nao conhecem
a favela
os movimentos culturais (online interview, 11 November 2009)[251]

He went on to emphasise the cultural capital and diversity of the favela where he lived, which he felt was usually overlooked in the media's recourse to stereotypes about drugs and *funk* parties:

as coisas que acontecem dentro da favela é muito mais do que drogas e baile funk
tem roda de jongo
capoeira
hip hop
o forrozão pé de serra
as festas tradicionais dos angolanos
isso eles ignoram (online interview, 11 November 2009)[252]

Although he expressed a desire to draw attention to these rich cultural manifestations in the favela, and recognised that he might be well-placed to do so, he was also reluctant to publish content which might somehow embellish the complex and challenging reality of favela life. Although he told me that he would much rather produce content about the talented people in the favela, who would not gain recognition unless someone like him portrayed them, and observed that the text we were discussing '*nao deveria ter sido escrito*'[253] (online interview, 11 November 2009), he also pointed to the urgent desire he had felt to get the word out about the conflict which inspired it: *'foi assim, galera, eu não aguento mais, tá morrendo gente para caramba e as pessoas têm que saber disso. E como é que a gente faz isso? Só divulgar esse link aí. E a galera pá e bum...'* (interview, 2 February 2010).[254] In this way, he explicitly sought non-local visibility for his text, and took advantage of the potential for speedy dissemination offered by the internet.

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[251] 'the mainstream media just goes there [to the favela] to say things they have made up themselves
actually they don't know
the favela
and the cultural movements' [n.b. the asterisk indicates where J. corrected his spelling]

[252] 'there is a lot more going on in the favela than drugs and *baile funk*
there is *roda de jongo* [*jongo* is an Afro-Brazilian style of dance and song, and *roda* refers to the circular formation in which it is performed]
capoeira [*capoeira* is an Afro-Brazilian martial art]
the *pé de serra forró* [*pé de serra* is a particular type of *forró* music]
the Angolans' traditional parties [Maré's population includes Angolan refugees]
all of this, they ignore'

[253] 'should not have been written'

[254] 'it was like this, guys, I can't stand it any more, masses of people are dying and everyone needs to know about this. And how do we go about this? Just share this link here. And they just went ahead and did it...' (Note the use of the sound words *pá* and *bum* to show emphasis - I have not attempted to find English equivalents, providing a free translation instead.)

This discussion of the different ways in which the text engages with the theme of journalism raises questions about genre. Whilst the text under consideration certainly incorporates journalistic elements at times, there are also other sections which seem far from what is conventionally considered journalism, even as such definitions may be changing in response to the possibilities and practices associated with the internet, as well as other related social changes and changes in media production identified by Wall (2005). J.'s text is a personal, angry – and yet in some eyes lyrical, poetic and creative[255] – reflection on the conflict, its representation, and more general issues associated with living in a favela. It therefore reflects the observation, made by Himmer (2004), that blogs tend to combine factual and interpretive information in their posts. Indeed, this hybridity is foregrounded in the text itself, where it employs language associated with documentary film-making – the idea of different modes of representation[256] – in its structure. This stems from the author's own knowledge of this area of work,[257] but is also, I argue, a reflexive strategy which draws attention to the construction of the text and the author's place within it. In what is explicitly flagged as a reflexive passage, the use of the first person is combined with references to a personified favela, alongside third person verbs with an ambiguous subject:

> *Vento e poeira,* ***modo reflexivo****. A favela não dorme, é calada, sufocada. Faroeste dos aflitos, veste a farda e tira a fralda, sem querer fui engajado, sem querer me humilharam. E ninguém sabe, e ninguém viu. É o preço que se paga pra não matarem a puta que me pariu.* [emphasis added][258]

A little further on, the author adopts a more detached mode of representation to present some factual information about the conflict and his experience of it:

> ***Modo observacional.*** *Os números me revoltam: 27 mortos, 6 presos, muitos foragidos e eu sem ver minha família há 1 mês.* [emphasis added][259]

The deliberate, overt use of different modes of representation here draws attention to the representation of the favela, one of the issues that the author is attempting to engage with in his text. In other words, as much as he draws attention to what happens in the favela, he is

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[255] Note that the author directly questioned interpretations of his text as poetic, as I discuss later in the chapter.

[256] The author mentioned that these modes came from a book about film-making, but did not specify which one. One potential source is Bill Nichols, who discusses different modes of documentary representation, including reflexive and observational modes, in his book *Representing Reality* (1991).

[257] The text also contains a couple of other references to cinema and the author's related activities, which also constitute further signs of its (multimedia) intertextuality. A phrase from the text, discussed with the author in informal conversation, turned out to refer to the title of a video, available on YouTube, which he had made as part of his involvement in a project providing training in audiovisual tools.

[258] 'Wind and dust, *reflexive mode.* The favela doesn't sleep, it is silenced, suffocated. A Wild West of the distressed, it puts on its uniform and takes off its nappy, without meaning to I got involved, without meaning to they humiliated me. And nobody knows anything, and nobody saw anything. It's the price to be paid for them not killing my fucking mother.' [emphasis added]

[259] '*Observational mode.* The numbers revolt me: 27 deaths, 6 arrests, many people on the run and I haven't seen my family for a month.' [emphasis added]

also concerned with *how* it is portrayed. The fact that he overtly flags up strategies of portrayal is a way of commenting on this and reminding his audience of the constructed nature of favela representation and the different positions that can be adopted.

The text's reflexivity can also be observed in its foregrounding of the general reluctance of favela residents to speak about aspects of life relating to violence, even as its author is engaged in doing the same in his own text. This reluctance is referenced in the phrase '*e ninguém sabe, e ninguém viu*' cited above, and also appears elsewhere in the text, after the comment about how drug traffickers expelled from the favelas occupied by the police are now active in other favelas: '*Denunciar? Nem pensar, isso é cultura popular.*'[260] As the author deals with difficult subject matter in his text, he draws attention to the challenges involved in doing so, as well as the idea, mentioned in one of his comments, that even when residents do denounce things which are going on, nobody pays attention or nothing is done about it. He also specifically mentions the strength and courage of local residents in dealing with the conflict situation. Finally, this reflexivity is implicit in the penultimate line of the text, which directly addresses its imagined reader(s): '*Mas quem vai me ouvir? Digam aí.*'[261]

A partial response to that question can be found in the comments the text attracted, and in how it was reposted and disseminated by internet users other than its original author. The chapter now turns to a discussion of how this text was visually and textually framed in different ways in the different places where it was published, and the implications for its embeddedness and authorship. I also consider small variations in the body of the text which were the result of delayed proofreading, the mobility of the text at different stages in the content event, and minor editing undertaken by those who reposted the text.

Visual and textual framing and reframing in a fluid text

In the chapter introduction, I proposed that *Terra Boa* can be understood as an example of a fluid text. Whilst Bryant's fluid text theory, outlined in chapter 2, has been developed in relation to literary works in print, its emphasis on how multiple actors engage with and materially shape a text in the writing and publication process is certainly relevant to the type of blog text under consideration here. As the discussion so far has revealed, the content event surrounding this text involved the original author, other participants in the group blog

260 'Report it? No chance, this is how things work round here.'
261 'But who will hear me? What do you say?'

where it was originally published, content creators who reposted the text on their own blog or site, those who commented on the post in its different locations, the editors of the print publications which republished the text, as well as those who disseminated or linked to the text in other ways. One can even argue that the internet may make it easier to access and analyse the different versions of a fluid text, as they unfold, since it is no longer necessary to gain access to personal and publishers' archives in order to do so. However, as I observed in the methodological note included in this chapter, attempting to follow fluid texts on the internet may also bring new methodological and logistical challenges. In addition, aside from the different ways the text circulated and was framed on the internet, there was also an additional dimension in its appearance in two print publications. As I noted earlier in the chapter, Hine has argued that attention should be paid to what happens to internet content when it circulates in offline media, and reading this assertion in the light of Maclean's arguments about the reposting of digital objects, the implication is that the availability of an internet text in different offline contexts or media may similarly affect its meaning or at very least make it accessible to different interpretive communities.

As already mentioned, the text under discussion here was preceded by a large photograph of Maré in its original appearance, showing part of the favela seen from a vantage point a little above street level (perhaps the roof of a taller building or a small hill), with a few trees in the right-hand corner of the photo, a street (on which several cars are visible, as well as a few more trees towards the top end) bisecting most of the image diagonally from the middle of the bottom edge towards the top left-hand corner, and the rest of the space taken up by buildings several stories high, many with blue water tanks on their roofs, as far as the eye can see (no sky appears in the photograph). This visual aid thus contributed to the territorial embeddedness of the text as well as situating the reader. It also meant that the immediate impact of the post was visual, particularly since the blog's own header also took up a considerable part of the screen. In fact, this header itself changed four times during the period I was following this text, meaning that even in its original location, the visual framing of the text was different at different points in the event. I noted in the introduction that this blog did not have a geographic focus, and reflecting this, the header images tended to present humorous, remixed images from film and popular culture (although they also responded to current events), contrasting with the realistic photograph of the favela which illustrated the post. Later, after the blog in question moved to its own domain, the text was reposted by its author on the new version of the site, which had a more static design and header, without images. A different photograph of the favela was used to illustrate the post this time, taken at

street level and more clearly showing people walking and cycling.[262] There was therefore much that was fluid about the visual framing of this text even just on the different incarnations of the blog where it was originally posted.

In the reposted versions of the text on other sites, the original photograph was included with the text where reposted by the original author (although its size varied), but in other versions the text either appeared with no photograph at all or, in one case, was accompanied by a different photograph of the local area which was sourced via Google by those responsible for the reposting.[263] That photograph was not dissimilar to the one originally selected by J. to accompany his post, in that it showed a view of the favela from a roof-top; however, in the foreground of this image we can see three boys, with their backs to the camera, standing on a roof looking out over the favela, which this time stretches to the horizon with some sky visible. With its inclusion of human figures, this image thus implies the perspective of local people on their area of residence and is not the voyeuristic and distancing panorama shot of the city, which I refer to in the following chapter. There, I contrast two images used in a blog sidebar: a view of Rio from above and a photograph of Maré taken at street level, from the perspective of the ordinary person moving through the city.

In print, the original photograph used by J. was maintained in one of the zines where the text was republished, but instead of a colour image, it became a black and white photographic background for the double page spread which carried the text, but the layout of the text (in white font) on a black background, on top of the photograph, meant that only parts of the photograph were visible. Rather than the image of the favela dominating the initial impression of the text, as in its original appearance on the web, in the print version the favela formed a partially obscured backdrop to the text. When the text then appeared in a book linked to a film, however, it was laid out differently, spread over two pages, which were interspersed with a page showing images from the film in question. The page opposite the first page of the text thus showed a group of armed men (apparently a mixture of police and drug traffickers) walking along a favela street, highlighting the text's focus on violent conflict. As part of print publications, within a more linear sequence of pages, the text is also framed differently to on the web, with its hypertextual connections. It also does not offer the same possibilities for

[262] In fact, this same photo of Maré was also used by the blogger discussed in chapter 5, in sidebar content emphasising her own territorial embeddedness. There, I discuss the significance of a street-level view of the favela as opposed to the city seen from above.
[263] Personal communication with one of the bloggers responsible for this instance of reposting, 24 June 2010. The text reached them by email.

expansion as the blog version. Nonetheless, the text itself underwent some alterations in both internet and print instances of republication.

The first direct sign of textual fluidity in *Terra Boa*, aside from the variations in framing or visual aspects of the text mentioned above, is that two slightly different versions of the text appeared even on the original blog where it was published. The first version contained a few small spelling or grammatical mistakes which were corrected within a couple of days of the text first being published. This can be explained by the blog's internal procedures for proofreading. In theory, as J. explained to me, once he had posted a text on the blog he would then contact one of his colleagues (if connected to the internet) to ask him to read it before beginning to disseminate it using other platforms. However, my own observations and analysis suggest that in the case of this particular text, small edits were made to the text even after the dissemination had begun, perhaps due to the urgency of the text and the situation it portrayed. In the first screenshot I made of the text, the final line read '*E ó, avisa pra geral aqui é o cria do Pinheiro!*'. In the next screenshot, which I took three days later to capture comments posted in the meantime, the final line read '*E ó, avisa pra geral: aqui é o cria do Pinheiro!*'. The only difference in this sentence is that a colon has been added, but even this tiny detail enables a more detailed reading of reposting practices.

When examining the reposted versions of the text, it is possible to observe that in three instances, it was the unedited version of the text, without the colon in the final sentence, which was reproduced. This implies that the original, un-proofread version of the text began to 'travel' before the amendments were made to the version on the original blog. One of these travelling versions, published on a blog for a film the author participated in making, then underwent some independent editing when it was included in a book published almost a year later, to accompany the film. In this version, the final sentence became '*E ó, avisa pra geral, aqui é o cria do Pinheiro!*', with the addition of a comma instead of a colon. This version of the text also includes other small changes. For example, quotation marks have been placed around the phrase '*prontos para morrer*' in the first paragraph, where they were not present in the original or proofread versions of the text.[264] In the sentence about tourists visiting Santa Marta which was discussed in an earlier section of this chapter, the words '*no bolso*' have been removed from one sentence just before the quotation from Captain Pricilla,

[264] The full sentence is '*Embora alguns deles tenham armas calibre 88 prontos pra morrer e estejam participando de uma guerra que já dura dois meses*'. ('Although some of them have calibre 88 weapons ready to die and are taking part in a war that has already been going on for two months.')

so the latter half now reads '*e os moradores começam a sentir o efeito da ocupação militar*' instead of '*começam a sentir o efeito da ocupação militar no bolso*'.[265] Most markedly, the word '*heróri*', mentioned above, has been rendered as simply '*herói*'. In one other reposted version of the text on a blog, these slang or colloquial terms also received similar treatment. Whilst the bloggers in question could not recall having made changes to the text,[266] a close analysis shows that somewhere in the travelling and reposting process, a couple of words have been rendered in italics which did not appear that way in the original text: '*midiahipocrisia*' and '*hômi*'. In this version, '*heróri*' has also been rendered as '*herói*'. In this way, some of the more inventive and colloquial aspects of the text were neutralised when other content creators became involved. Finally, when the blog where the text was originally published was taken down for a while, before resurfacing on its own domain, this text was reposted there by its author in its original, unedited version, almost as if the whole content event might begin again, except of course the timing was different and the urgency had passed.

Whilst the alterations outlined above are quite small, they are nonetheless significant. Crucially, using a fluid text approach when analysing such alterations can provide a window on the practices of the different actors involved in what I am terming a content event. As Bryant remarked, justifying his fluid text approach to literary texts which I have adapted in this thesis:

> I prefer to call these apparent instabilities and indeterminacies *textual fluidities* because the surviving variant texts, when taken together, give us a vivid material impression of the *flow* of creativity, both authorial and editorial, that constitutes the cultural phenomenon of writing. (2002: 6; emphasis in original)

The fluidity of *Terra Boa* as a text thus reflects the fluidity of textual practices on the internet, particularly when multiple users become involved in disseminating and amplifying texts originally authored by others as was the case here. Indeed, this practice potentially has implications for how we understand authorship. As I have already explained, there were variations in how the authorship of the text under discussion here was attributed,[267] and its author offered an explanation of how this came about:

> *Porque internet... o texto está lá, não tem assinatura, né, quando você lança, eu não assino... eu lanço lá, aí as pessoas vão copiando, aí esse texto chega no teu email às vezes colado no*

[265] '*and the residents begin to feel the effect of the military occupation*'. The missing words, '*no bolso*', refer to a financial effect.
[266] Personal communication, 24 June 2010.
[267] My own decision to identify the text's author as J. in this thesis adds another variant to this list of how his authorship has been attributed. I discuss the wider issue of identification of research participants in more detail in chapter 2.

corpo do email, aí vira autor desconhecido, né. Já vem uma galera encaminhando para um para outro... Aí o texto toma outra... aí já vira autor desconhecido e aí... se for para ser autor desconhecido, por aí mesmo. (interview, 2 February 2010)[268]

He also noted that although the internet itself offered some ways for authors to try and follow their texts, such as link counters, it is hard to keep track when users do not provide a link back to the original instance of publication, for whatever reason: '*às vezes não te linkam e aí você se perde, não tem jeito*' (interview, 2 February 2010).[269] Despite expressing some concern about how to follow and measure the reach of internet content, and maintain the connection between an author and their work, he also suggested that his text had been published on the internet for the very purpose of being read widely, and that this meant that it became part of a collective repository, available for appropriation:

> *Se alguém pegasse o texto e dissesse que era dele, também eu não... é de todo mundo. O texto não é... não é eu. Acho que [...] as pessoas têm que se apropriar também né, do que já foi produzido. Porque existem muitas coisas produzidas que são esquecidas, né. Aí a gente sempre querendo inventar coisa nova, quando na verdade pode se reciclar texto, pode se reciclar imagem.* (interview, 2 February 2010)[270]

As Moody (2008: 106) has argued, on blogs '[a]uthorship is recognized as communal, meaning as plural, and text as dispersed and mobile'. Nonetheless, although attitudes and practices related to authorship may be changing with the internet, there are tensions and challenges associated with this fluidity and the distributed and unpredictable nature of internet communication. Scholars working on Twitter, for example, have drawn attention to how 'referents are often lost as messages spread and the messages themselves often shift', with implications for 'authorship, attribution and communicative fidelity' (boyd, Golder & Lotan 2010: 1). *Terra Boa* certainly lost some of its referents as it travelled through reposting, and its author expressed a more general concern about the internet in this regard, noting that '*As pessoas perdem referências, quem é o autor daquela obra*' (interview, 2 February 2010).[271]

Authorship on blogs is also affected by the ability for readers (and authors themselves) to comment on content. As outlined in the section discussing the text's engagement with media representations of the conflict, J. used the blog's comment facility to extend his text. The

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[268] 'Because on the internet... the text is there, it isn't signed, you know, when you publish the text, I don't sign it... I publish it and then people start copying it, and then this text might reach your email sometimes just copied into the body of the message, and then it becomes unknown author, doesn't it. There is a whole crowd of people forwarding on to one person, to another person... And so the text takes on another... then it becomes unknown author and then... if it's got to be unknown author, that's the way it is.'

[269] 'Sometimes they don't link to you and then you get lost, there's nothing you can do about it'

[270] 'If someone took the text and said it was his, I wouldn't... it belongs to everyone. The text isn't... isn't me. I think that [...] people have to appropriate as well, appropriate what's already been produced. Because there are many things out there that have already been produced that get forgotten, aren't there. And here we are always wanting to invent new things, when actually you can recycle text, you can recycle images.'

[271] 'People lose track, of who is the author of that work.'

conflict went on (or even after the period of this specific conflict, life went on and other related incidents took place), the media coverage went on, and so did his text, which continued to be written not just by J. himself, but also by the readers who added comments, contributing to a collaborative and open-ended text.[272] Such fluidity can be seen as a general feature of blog postings, as Himmer has observed:

> The weblog collapses many of the common assumptions made about texts, as it complicates the distinction between author and audience through the multivocality of both direct commenting, and the reader's ability to reorder the narrative in myriad ways. Owing to its ongoing creation over an undefined period of time, the weblog becomes a text that constantly expands through the input of both readers and writers. This absence of a discrete, 'completed' product makes the weblog as a form resistant to the commoditization either of itself, or of any one particular interpretation. (2004: n.p.)

Although the readers of the text are not the main focus here, we can speculate that they probably had different paths or moments of encounter with the text, via the multiple ways the text was disseminated by different people on different platforms, or perhaps internet searches – as indeed I did myself. Along these lines, Himmer (2004: n.p.) also discusses the idea of infinite and dynamic reader entry points to a blog post, determined not by the original author or text (indeed, he suggests these are entirely beyond the author's control or constraint) but rather by the engagement of other readers with the text. This 'potentiality' (Himmer 2004: n.p.) can be seen in this event, I suggest, in the way that the comment thread was added to or reignited after several months of silence, in the publication of another text on the same subject matter and the creation of a link, and therefore a dialogue of sorts, between the two texts via their comment sections, in the use of a phrase employed in the dissemination of this text on social network sites as the title of a second, related text, and so on. Overall, the text under consideration in this chapter incorporated a number of elements which were picked up and taken forwards, whether by the author or other participants in the event, whether in their original form or after undergoing modifications and transformations. For example, the text inspired a cineclub session, showing films related to the themes it covered, and is also being used in the classroom by a teacher friend of the author's, as well, of course, as being included in this doctoral thesis.

[272] Of course, it is likely to have been only a small proportion of readers who actually commented on the text. This can be inferred from the gap between the number of comments and the figure of 2000 hits in a single day provided by the author, and general observations about the relatively small proportion of internet users who create content. According to Jakob Nielsen's (2006) model of participation inequality, blogs are a particularly extreme case, with 0.1% of users responsible for most contributions, 5% contributing from time to time, and 95% reading or observing, without contributing. There is also no way of knowing what readers who did not comment made of the text I am discussing here.

As far as possible, J. sought to monitor, via the internet, what was happening to his text, because he wanted to try to get an idea of who was reading it. For this he used Google searches and the trackback facility embedded in the blog software.[273] Although he wanted to reach as many people as possible, to give them an insight into what it was like to live in the favela during the conflict, he was also apprehensive about what reactions his publication of the text might generate locally. We can therefore see here how two different aspects of this event are intertwined in relation to the interest in following a text: its favela, or local, dimension and its internet, or translocal, dimension. It was the latter which ultimately affected the authorship of J.'s text, after it travelled and was reposted in multiple locations. However, I suggest that the text's local origins in the favela also affected how its authorship was or was not attributed. As I have already noted, the original posting of the text was made under a pseudonym, following conventions on the group blog in question. However, in some of the other places where it was then reposted, including by the author himself, the author's full name was supplied, as a by-line at the beginning or end of the text. Authorship was also potentially implied by the profiles used to publish the text on collaborative sites or platforms, since these usually require users to open an account under their name or a nickname of their choice. However, in three instances where the text was reposted by people other than its original author, including on a politician's website and a portal about favelas, the text was published without any markers of authorship or provenance – no link was provided to the original text, no details were provided of the author (the politician's website specifically stated it was by an '*autor anônimo*'), and the original title of the text was amended, so that it became '*A voz de um morador da Maré*'.[274] This perhaps reflected a decision by those involved in reposting to protect the identity of the text's author, or else just the fact that the text reached some of them without any information about its author. Nonetheless, the decision to repost the text without a named author also implies that it was considered to be powerful even without this information – the insistence in the amended title that the narrative came from a local resident also further emphasises its territorial embeddedness. In one of the zine versions of the text, the author's name is supplied but there is no reference to the fact that the text has previously been published on the internet and where, although J. believes this was an oversight rather than a conscious choice. All of these details can be seen as part of the text's 'biography', to recall one of Maclean's three points about what happens to digital objects when they travel.

273 In this respect, J.'s attempts to track the mobility of his text mirrored my own practices as a researcher 'following the content', which I outlined in chapter 2.

274 'The voice of a Maré resident.'

In fact, J. told me that he had not originally intended his name to be associated with the text but that when this happened, he did not do anything to stop it, pointing to the unpredictable and ultimately uncontrollable nature of internet practices in this regard:

> *Eu não queria ter assinado o texto*
> *eu queria que fosse a voz da favela*
> *acabou que o texto tomou vida sozinho*
> *e as coisas foram acontecendo*
> *e eu também deixei rolar*
> *eu acho maneirão Autor desconhecido...* (online interview, 11 November 2009)[275]

J.'s reference to the 'voice of the favela' in this excerpt also brings to mind Gomes da Cunha's comments on the representativity of content produced by favela content projects which I discussed in the preceding chapter, and my ongoing emphasis in this thesis on the diversity of favelas and their residents. In other words, although this text attempts to provide an account of a shared experience, it can only really be considered one voice of the favela.

Nonetheless, given the way this narrative about the favela travelled, via different internet sites and other forms of publication, and how the attribution of its authorship varied in the process, it is worth considering whether its territorial embeddedness was strengthened or destabilised as a result. To an extent, the author's credentials as a 'voice of the favela' were embedded within the language of the text itself, which underwent only minor alterations as it travelled, and its territorially embedded authorship thus remained strong, even perhaps being strengthened, in three cases, by the alteration of the title to emphasise that its author was a resident of Maré, as I suggested in the previous paragraph. If, therefore, these various clues enable readers to make assumptions or draw conclusions about its authorship and territorial provenance, this text can be seen to reflect what Himmer has noted about authorship in blogs:

> Unlike a novel in which the author's interpretations are viewed through the lens of a character, or traditional journalism in which the author is purposely made invisible, writing on a weblog can only ever be read through the filter of the reader's prior knowledge of the author. As one day's posts build on points raised or refuted in a previous day's, readers must actively engage [in] the process of 'discovering' the author, and of parsing from fragment after fragment who is speaking to them, and why, and from where whether geographically, mentally, politically, or otherwise. (2004: n.p.)

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[275] 'I didn't want to sign the text
I wanted it to be the voice of the favela
but in the end the text took on a life of its own
and things just happened
and I also went with the flow
I think unknown Author is very cool...'

In other words, authorship on a blog is constructed gradually through what the author reveals about him/herself over time in the content, and also his/her embeddedness in different contexts, place-based or otherwise. Viégas (2005: n.p.) suggests that the same is true for group blogs with multiple authors, since it is usually possible to see which author was responsible for which posts. However, it is necessary to consider what happens to this situated authorship when a text is detached from the original site of its publication, or published on multiple sites, as was the case here.

As I have already pointed out, the framing and contextualisation of *Terra Boa* was fluid and some of the 'paratextual'[276] and non-textual elements, such as the title or photograph, by-line (even to the original pseudonym used, rather than to the author's real name), and information about where (and indeed when) it was originally posted, were altered or omitted. Its authorship was therefore destabilised or displaced to a certain extent by its mobility. However, this fluidity also reflects the possibility, afforded by the translocal nature of the internet, of reaching many different users and audiences via multiple channels and platforms, which inevitably results in content being framed in multiple ways. The author of this text was certainly aware of this potential, and sought to take advantage of it, at the same time as it confounded his attempts to keep track of the text:

> *na internet milhões de pessoas podem te ler simultaneamente. Isso num clique. Cliquei o link. A possibilidade que ela te dá é muito maior. [...] mas você também saber o alcance é dificil, né.* (interview, 2 February 2010)[277]

In this way, despite his attempts to localise the narrative through place-based references and colloquial language, J. was also aware that once disseminated, his text would reach a range of audiences, and that this process was unpredictable. The following, and final, section of this chapter will return to a discussion of the issues relating to translocal circulation of local content on the internet, which were introduced at the start of the chapter, and use them to round off the discussion of this text and its trajectory.

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[276] Jonathan Gray draws on Genette's understanding of paratexts as 'the thresholds of interpretation' and explains that 'paratexts guide our entry to texts, setting up all sorts of meanings and strategies of interpretation, and proposing ways to make sense of what we will find "inside" the text' (Gray 2008: 38). In fact, as Gray (2008: 37) notes, Genette 'distinguished between "peritexts", as paratexts appended to a text – such as book covers, typeface, prefaces, dedications, paper quality and name of the author – and "epitexts", as paratexts found apart from the text, yet that discuss it, such as reviews, interviews with the author, magazine ads and public responses'. Gray notes that the term 'paratext' has not yet been widely used in communication, media and cultural studies.

[277] 'on the internet millions of people can read what you've written at the same time. In just one click. I clicked on the link. It gives you much greater possibilities. [...] but it's also difficult for you to know the reach, isn't it'

Following the travelling texts of local content on the internet and beyond

My analysis of this text, and the content event surrounding it, has shown how local content can travel far beyond the local on the internet, even as it maintains strong markers of its locality. Blommaert, writing about 'mobile texts' in the age of globalisation (though not texts on the internet as such) has noted that '[a] description of texts these days must [...] necessarily have two sides: one, a description of the *local* economies in which they are produced, and two, analyses of what happens to them when they become *translocal* documents' (2008: 8, emphasis in original). Although Blommaert's comments are very useful when considering the issues around a local narrative which is amplified and distributed widely on the internet, it is nonetheless hard to see, in a globalised and intertextual context, how one can isolate a purely local economy of textual production. In relation to favelas, Jaguaribe and Hetherington (2004: 156) remind us that they have been exoticized for foreigners and commodified as spectacle by the Brazilian media, and that '[i]n this flow, the favela dwellers themselves produce their own repertoires of representation, which are often influenced by global images as well as by local identities'.

Returning to the internet then, one could argue that a text becomes potentially translocal as soon as it is published on the internet, if not even before. This reconfigured relationship between the local and the global, or the local and the translocal, which is characteristic of new media technologies is exemplified in the concept of 'network locality' which was discussed at length in chapter 1. Recalling Gordon's (2008: n.p.) assertion that 'everything from the spectacular to the mundane has global reach' on the internet, *Terra Boa* can certainly be described as a representation of an event which is both locally *and* translocally spectacular (the latter dimension being clear in the mainstream media's coverage of the same conflict) and this is likely why it prompted engagement and response by internet users, and indeed, why it was written and disseminated in the first place. For J., the various contacts and ideas set in motion by the text showed that there was a demand for content about favelas, that '*as pessoas tão querendo saber o que tá acontecendo nas comunidades e não sabem*' (interview, 2 February 2010).[278]

On the internet, therefore, 'local' content becomes potentially accessible to anyone, and subject to differently located interpretations. There may be ways of targeting the dissemination of a particular piece of content to specific audiences, who could be considered

[278] 'people want to know what is going on in the communities [favelas] and they don't know'

local to it in some way (not necessarily geographically) and connected in affective or thematic network localities which are enabled by particular technological platforms or tools. However, the internet also offers the means to amplify a local message even if, as discussed above, its trajectory may be difficult to monitor and follow once it has been published. In the case of the text under discussion here, there was a concerted effort on the part of the author, and those involved in the group blog where he originally published the text, to disseminate it and to encourage others to become involved in doing so:

> *No mundo digital tem que saber direcionar a informação, se não ela se perde. Acho que foi isso que fiz. Mandei pra quem me interessava que lesse o que eu tava dizendo. Na verdade, foi um grande desabafo e eu queria que as pessoas que estivessem ao meu alcance pudessem reproduzir o meu discurso para o o máximo de pessoas. Foi por ai que pensei...* (personal communication, 27 October 2009)[279]

At the same time, there remained a tension between the success of this effort and the desire to know who was reading the text, on the part of the original author.

Here I return to the work of Maclean which I introduced at the beginning of this chapter, and to the first of his three points about what happens to internet content when it is reposted, namely that it is more likely to take on unintended meanings. Drawing on Benjamin Lee and Edward LiPuma's idea of 'cultures of circulation'[280] as a feature of globalisation, Maclean also writes that:

> Spaces of circulation are not empty. Nor do spaces of circulation passively transmit what passes through them. To the contrary, the socio-cultural and technological practices that make different forms [of] circulation possible actively produce meaning as well, though we are rarely cognizant of how this occurs. (2008: 867)

A detailed study of the different ways the text under consideration here was received by all the different audiences who accessed it through different sites or media is well beyond the scope of the present research, which focuses on the practices involved in creating and disseminating content – although it is of course true that some of the text's readers became co-authors and co-creators of the content when they participated in commenting, disseminating and publishing the text. The focus here has been on an analysis of the different ways the text was framed in the different sites where it was published, by the original author or by others, to see how the contextualisation of the text on different sites and other features, such as the title used, may have affected its meaning.

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279 'In the digital world you have to know how to direct information, otherwise it gets lost. I think that's what I did. I sent the text to the people I wanted to read what I was saying. In truth it was a big outburst and I wanted the people I could reach to reproduce my discourse to as many people as possible. That's more or less what I was thinking...'

280 Lee and LiPuma 2002 cited in Maclean 2008: 867.

It is important to remember that what I have been referring to as the 'text' was in fact a post in a sequence of many (appearing before and after it) by the same author and other authors on the group blog. The degree to which it can be detached from that context in the analysis undertaken here is questionable, although in each reposting on a different blog or site, the text also takes its place within another constantly expanding flow and chronology of content, and in turn generates new entry and departure points – to use Himmer's terminology – for the text. However, I contend that this context and the paths that were constructed around it, open-ended as they are, remain fundamental to its interpretation. In this way, the publication of the same text on multiple sites and blogs, by the original author and by readers of the text, does not necessarily generate a contextual or chronological hierarchy, but rather a multiplicity of different, although interlinked, contexts and chronologies.

I have already indicated that mobility of a text can have consequences for its authorship, and there is some overlap between Maclean's idea of the unintended meanings that can result from reposting, and Himmer's emphasis on the lack of authorial control or constraint over what happens to blog content after publication, which I mentioned earlier in the chapter. The author of the text under consideration here, for example, felt that in reading the text, some people had focused on the aesthetic aspects of his text (the form), whereas for him it was the message that was most important (the content):

> *muita gente fala da poesia*
> *que o texto traz*
> *não quiz fazer poesia*
> *quiz falar da minha vida*
> *quiz falar do sofrimento que é viver a margem*
> *e ser ignorado pelos que me chamam de massa*
> (online interview, 11 November 2009)[281]

What J. saw as the language of the favela, then, became poetry in other people's readings of his text, and this can be considered an unintended meaning, from his point of view. Of course, there is nothing to say that an unintended meaning (resulting from reposting or otherwise) is necessarily negative, and it may be an inevitable by-product of translocal visibility. As J. himself acknowledged, despite some unintended meanings, he felt that his

[281] 'a lot of people talk about the poetry
in the text
i didn't mean to write poetry
i wanted to talk about my life
i wanted to talk about the suffering of living on the margins
and being ignored by those who call me one of the masses'

text's capacity to provoke reflection had made it accessible to a range of readers, and this can be seen in characteristics of the content event it generated, covering multiple sites of publication and dissemination, both on the internet and in print.

Conclusion

This event incorporated a range of different internet platforms, including Orkut, Twitter, email, blogs and other collaborative websites, as well as print formats, in the publication and dissemination of a text by its author, his friends and contacts and other content creators. It therefore shows that the internet can offer the space for residents to frame their own representations of the favela, including those which recount difficult or painful aspects which bring particular challenges, and for these representations to travel fairly widely, intentionally or unintentionally, even if they may undergo some transformations in the process. As Gomes da Cunha (2007: n.p.) reminds us, favelas have long 'been portrayed as the setting of an endless war, a constant conflict among conceptions of justice, legality, city, urban order and power'. Although J. observed that he would much rather write about everyday, cultural and celebratory aspects of life in the favela, it seems there are sometimes more urgent stories, such as the one in this text, which need to be told. Despite the feeling of empowerment which resulted from writing and disseminating the text, however, there appeared to be a lingering tension between the strong desire to be heard, to take advantage of the opportunities offered by the internet to give voice to the perspective of those living in the favela and to provide an alternative narrative to that of the mainstream media which is seen to cover favelas in a limited way, and the negotiation of the potentially unpredictable aspects of giving such translocal visibility to local events. In this sense, the internet can certainly not be considered an 'e-topian' (Crawford 2003, cited in Sterne 2006: 17) world apart, but rather a mirror of at least some of the complexities and inequalities that characterise daily life in Rio de Janeiro.

However, this chapter has shown how local content produced by favela residents can provide alternative narratives about conflict and violence that are more complex than those which circulate in the mainstream media, and which focus on the experiences and perspectives of the people who live in the affected areas. In this way, such narratives add (literally) to the 'web of representations' surrounding favelas, to use a phrase coined by Jaguaribe and Hetherington (2004: 155).[282] The text discussed in this chapter, by one of the

[282] There is no hint in Jaguaribe and Hetherington's text that their use of the word 'web' referred to the internet,

'new subjects of discourse' identified by Bentes as emerging from the urban periphery, also adopted a self-reflexive stance towards the act of representation, foregrounding different modes and engaging with other representations of the conflict it covered, as well as of favelas and their residents more broadly speaking, at the same time as it drew attention to the connections to other actors and places, both in Rio and beyond. In this way, it reflects Gomes da Cunha's observation about internet content produced by favela residents:

> By invading the virtual sphere of the Internet, favela communities and their mediators produce a kind of exhumation of ghosts present in the popular and violent imaginary of the city, or reinterpret and recycle its leftovers, fragments, and whatever else can still be reinterpreted. (2007: n.p.)

The main focus of this chapter has been on the territorial embeddedness of *Terra Boa* as an example of local content which was published in multiple interpretive contexts. I first considered how this embeddedness was communicated within the blog post where it first appeared, in its title, in the author's choice of image to accompany it, and in its language and style. I then looked at how the text's embeddedness was affected when it gained translocal visibility and mobility, being published in other locations and therefore becoming available to readers embedded in other geographical or social spaces and subject to unintended meanings. In this process, different aspects of the text were altered, omitted or redacted. Nonetheless, although the locality and territorial embeddedness of this text, as well as its authorship, were undoubtedly affected by its mobility through reposting and other forms of dissemination, I argued that it still remained strongly localised and embedded through its author's choice of language, and the dissemination channels he used to target specific audiences who could be considered to be local to it in some way. As suggested by its appearance in multiple locations, both on the internet and in print, it also remained powerful and provocative to a range of readers.

Drawing on Maclean's discussion about the significance of spaces of circulation and how the practices involved in circulation may contribute to meaning, I suggest that this event points to the fact that it is not just the production of content per se that is central in thinking through the implications of residents' narratives about the favela which are published on the internet. Rather, the nature and extent of the circulation of these narratives, whether directed or more organic, is also significant and has an effect on meaning – this relates not just to Maclean's points about reposting, which I have used in structuring my analysis, but also to Himmer's observations about the infinite potentiality and openendedness of blogs specifically, as a

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although this might have been the case.

cybertextual form. In other words, one cannot approach local content published on blogs without taking into consideration the endless, unpredictable and uncontrollable ways such content can be expanded both by their original author and by their readers, via a *circuito-blogue*, some of it directly linked to the blog and some of it unpredictable and difficult to monitor and trace. Thus, although the internet can be used to amplify the reach and visibility of local content, the trajectory and composite meaning of such 'travelling texts' may be hard to follow. In the next case study, I look more directly at the idea of 'framing content' and its role in producing locality and territorially embedding content, again both on the internet and in print.

Chapter 5: 'Framing content', marginal literature and a (trans)local writing competition

Introduction

The previous chapter focused on a single text about the favela which was published, linked and disseminated using multiple tools and platforms, and was reworked and reproduced in different formats and media, sometimes undergoing transformations in the process. Although the text itself was of interest in relation to how it produced locality, the communication flows around the text and the way it was framed were equally central to the analysis. A similar approach will be maintained in this chapter, although this time the core content around which the flows and framing take place is that published on several different blogs maintained by a writer and student from Maré. The communicative activities involved in promoting print publications and a writing competition – this latter being this chapter's 'content event' – which resulted from this internet content creation are also included in the analysis. I argue that the explicit embedding of content in geographical place via what I call 'framing content' on blogs serves to produce locality, even when the content being framed does not itself refer to identifiable geographic places.

However, geographic locality is not the only kind of locality produced or experienced by the individual in question via her content creation activities. Although she has a strong connection to Maré (describing herself as an enthusiastic resident), and a strong interest in producing and promoting representations about Maré and similar areas which counter perceived gaps in those generated by outsiders, she also has interests which go beyond the geographically local to the realm of the translocal (e.g. literature, and Hispanic language and culture). These different empirical contexts of locality came together in the writing competition promoted by this writer, which was initially locally focused on Maré, and later resurfaced with a translocal focus, inviting the submission of texts about suburban settings across Rio and periphery settings anywhere in the world, provided they were written in Portuguese.

This chapter draws on informal exchanges and interviews with the writer, whom I will call A., ethnographically inspired observations and analysis of her internet and print content as well as the launch event for her first solo book. It contextualises A.'s efforts to disseminate and support writing from favelas and other urban periphery areas specifically in relation to themes and practices associated with the contemporary *literatura marginal* (marginal literature)

movement in Brazil. This movement has emerged in the last decade, although the same name was also previously attached to a group of poets active in Rio de Janeiro in the 1970s,[283] and brings together mainly male writers from periphery areas of São Paulo, often with a connection to the hip hop movement. Peçanha do Nascimento (2009: 31)[284] charts the emergence of *literatura marginal* as what she calls a 'literary-cultural movement'[285] and locates its genesis in three special editions of the *Caros Amigos* magazine which were edited by Ferréz, the author of the novel *Capão Pecado,*[286] in 2001, 2004 and 2005. As discussed in chapter 3, *literatura marginal* is one aspect of a broader trend involving the increasing visibility of the cultural production of Brazilian urban peripheries, with cinema and music being other particularly high profile examples. Although A. did not explicitly identify with the *literatura marginal* movement when I first met her, she certainly employs similar terminology in describing her work and that of others like her. She has also become increasingly aware of other writers like herself through her promotion of writing competitions.

The chapter begins by briefly introducing A. and her blogs, before presenting a detailed analysis of specific examples of 'framing content' which illustrate how A. customised the sidebar of her literary blog, using textual and visual elements to explicitly embed its content and herself as its author, as originating from Maré. This affirmation of territory is two-fold, as A. simultaneously affirms her belonging to her favela and to her city, thereby showing how local content creation is part of imaginative practices associated with the production of locality, which in this case resignify and remap the relationships between different empirical scales of locality in Rio de Janeiro. Such imaginative practices are also influenced by dominant representations of favelas, and these are the focus of the next section of the chapter, as I consider how A. reacts to such representations, and discuss the aspects of favela life she believes deserve greater emphasis. The focus of the chapter then shifts to a discussion of print publication of A.'s work, both in an edited collection and in her own self-

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[283] The previous *literatura marginal* generation was made up of middle/upper-class poets, who circulated their texts independently. See Peçanha do Nascimento (2009: 47-48) for a very useful table summarising the main characteristics of the two generations.

[284] This book is the result of a dissertation for a masters degree in anthropology undertaken at the University of São Paulo (USP), and published by Aeroplano in a book series on cultural manifestations from the periphery funded by the Brazilian state-owned oil company Petrobras. The series in question, entitled '*Tramas Urbanas*', has tended to publish books by cultural activists from the periphery, but there are a couple of volumes, like this one, which present academic research on the periphery for a wider audience. However, Peçanha do Nascimento is herself from the periphery of São Paulo, as noted in her methodology section and in the preface to the book. Petrobras is the largest funder of cultural and social projects in Brazil (see McCann 2008: 131, 140-142 for a discussion of its cultural funding).

[285] *'um movimento literário-cultural'*

[286] The title of the novel is a play on the name of Ferréz's São Paulo neighbourhood: Capão Redondo. For a discussion of a neighbourhood website from Capão Redondo see Sá (2007).

published book, and her use of different internet platforms in disseminating and promoting these volumes. I compare A.'s practices to those of the São Paulo-based *literatura marginal* authors studied by Peçanha do Nascimento[287] and also relate them to the broader global and Brazilian trend of increases in self-publication as a result of opportunities associated with digital technologies. I briefly look at the translocal themes covered in A.'s first solo-authored book, and show how the inclusion of specific extracts from it in an account of the book's launch event reembedded the book in a specific local setting. Finally, I introduce the writing competition organised by A. and consider how she used her own emerging visibility to construct a platform to support and promote the work of others like her, beginning with fellow residents of Maré and gradually expanding to a broader focus on the urban periphery which allowed for diverse experiences and perspectives at the same time as it emphasised and affirmed a shared identity. I show that like the blog content discussed in the early sections of the chapter, this competition also constituted a means of framing and embedding local content.

Introducing A.

A. is in her mid-thirties, and studies at a public university in Rio. She returned to education following a fifteen-year gap after attending a *pré-vestibular* course offered by an NGO in the favela where she lives – she had intended to attend university at a younger age, but these plans were put on hold when she became pregnant. She is now a mother of two and teaches on *pré-vestibular* courses herself, although not in her neighbourhood, and also provides private tutoring services. At the same time as beginning her university studies, she also became the proud owner of her own computer and began to take her first steps on the internet. A. is enthusiastic about the internet and the opportunities it has brought her, talking about it on several occasions as a 'window' which has enabled her to raise her profile as a writer, get to know people (including from other countries) and learn many new things. In her own words, '*É, tudo para mim começou com a internet. Acho que a internet para mim foi fundamental*'.[288]

[287] Peçanha do Nascimento's study includes case studies of three better-known *literatura marginal* authors: Ferréz, Sérgio Vaz, and Sacolinha.
[288] 'Yes, for me everything started with the internet. I think the internet was fundamental for me.'

A. has four blogs, the oldest of which was set up in May 2008 and the latest of which is a blog promoting her private tutoring services, which went live in mid-2010.[289] In a text published on her original blog, which is where she posts her literary work, she explains that the blog came into being not only as a platform for publishing and sharing her writing, but also as a way of exchanging ideas, meeting people, discussing literature and arts, and making connections with other writers like herself, active on the internet. Initially, according to A. (email interview, 27 April 2010), she posted all her content on a single blog, but after a while she began to find this a little messy. She therefore opted to start another blog, dedicated to her opinions on political and social issues, and maintained her original blog for the publication of her poems and short stories. However, there was still no home for the information about literary and artistic events and competitions (both those relevant to the local area and those with a broader scope) which friends asked her to publicise, so she created an additional blog for this purpose, which eventually hosted the writing competition which is discussed in later sections of this chapter. More recently, as mentioned above, she has also set up a fourth blog to promote her work as a tutor and teacher. Each of the blogs has a different visual identity, based on a different Google Blogger template, although A. regularly switches between templates.

A.'s main writing blog, in particular, is constantly undergoing transformations, as she has acknowledged in her own introductory page about the blog, saying that she 'changes its clothes' from time to time (screenshot, 14 March 2010).[290] This echoes Badger's assertion that '[i]f we think of weblogs as being "homepage[s] that we wear", then it is the visual elements that tailor the garment to fit the individual' (2004: n.p.).[291] As well as the variation in templates,[292] the content published in the sidebar of A.'s writing blog has also changed and developed over the course of the research, demonstrating that the blog itself – as a platform or site for self-publication – constitutes a work in progress, and is never static or finished. Indeed, Scheidt and Wright (2004: n.p.) note that it is in the sidebar that the majority of blog customisation takes place. Such customisation in A.'s blog can be seen, for example, in the personalised headings for the different sections in the blog sidebar, as well as the content

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[289] Since my fieldwork ended, she has also set up a separate website, using a free service, for the project she is developing around marginal literature, including the writing competitions and anthologies mentioned in this chapter.

[290] This is the first screenshot I have showing separate pages on the blog, but it is likely that they were added a short time before this. Note that Google only made the stand-alone pages functionality widely available to users of its Blogger software in February 2010 (McCullough 2010).

[291] The phrase in quotation marks within the citation is from Coates 2003, cited by Badger.

[292] At least six different templates were used, for varying lengths of time each, between June 2009, and the second half of 2010 when I was writing up this case study.

included there. To employ Chandler's argument about homepages, this customisation can be considered a form of bricolage:

> Especially in a virtual medium one may reselect and rearrange elements until a pattern emerges which seems to satisfy the constraints of the task and the current purposes of the user. Indeed, no version of the resulting text may be regarded as final — completion may be endlessly deferred in the medium in which everything is always 'under construction'. (1998 cited in Deuze 2006: 70)

As discussed in the previous chapter, a similar observation about the ongoing mutability of internet content can also be made about an individual blog post which receives comments and is reposted or republished in different ways. Here, however, the emphasis is rather on the textual and visual content of the structure, design and layout of a blog as a 'fluid text' in itself, which serves as a frame for blog posts and a site for practices of territorial embedding which may then influence how the posts are read. This potential for constant experimentation, and ongoing transformation of a blog's framing content, constitutes a major challenge to providing a reliable and stable description of any blog,[293] particularly when one is also interested in the visual aspects and their interaction with the textual aspects of a blog, angles which are often overlooked in research (Scheidt & Wright 2004: n.p.; Garcia et al 2009: 57-58, 62-64).

A.'s blog certainly cannot be reduced to its textual features. Images are an important component of the blog, and sound and moving image (video) are also incorporated, via plug-in players. Aside from the visual aspects of the particular templates used (header images, colour schemes, layout, and so on), a range of other images were also included in the blog. During the course of my research, for example, the sidebar (or sometimes the footer) included some or all of the following images: a photograph of the blog's author; photographs of Rio and the favela where she lives; a slideshow widget presenting a selection of photographs of different activities associated with her literary activities (such as launch events); photographs of well-known literary and cultural figures, accompanied by quotation from their work;[294] thumbnail pictures of those 'following' the blog via Google Blogger; and badges (with links) for other literature-oriented sites or social network sites, both Brazilian and Latin American or international, where A. publishes work or makes connections. Sitting

[293] Indeed, it should be noted that the content described below, even the more static sidebar/footer content, was not all present on the blog at the same time. A date is provided for screenshots to show how the content evolved.
[294] Literary and cultural figures who appeared in the blog sidebar or footer in this way included Carlos Drummond de Andrade, Manoel Bandeira, Pablo Neruda, Edgar Allan Poe, Cecília Meireles. There were also quotations without images from Gabriel García Marquez, Bertolt Brecht, Frida Kahlo, Paulo Freire, Albert Einstein, José Saramago, Clarice Lispector and Miguel de Cervantes.

in front of her computer during our face-to-face interview, A. explained that many of these badges and links displayed on her blog were in fact there to assist her own navigation around the internet, with the blog serving as a kind of homepage from which she could then access other sites, rather than, as she felt it might appear, to showcase or publicise her activities. Other visual resources included pictures of the covers of print collections containing work by A., which were added to as these increased, and posters or promotional images for events in the local area and elsewhere.

A particularly striking visual aspect of A.'s writing blog is the inclusion of an image at the top of each of the posts containing a literary text, whether a poem or short story. Source information is not provided for these images, but it seems likely that they are discovered via internet search. What is clear is that there is an effort to select a photograph which reflects or speaks to the ideas contained in the text. As Badger (2004: n.p.) has noted in a general observation about blogs which is relevant in this particular case, '[a] rapport is quickly established between images and words in weblogs where one supports and enhances the other'. This rapport between image and text constitutes a key feature of A.'s blogs and their content and can also be seen in sidebar content relating to her place of residence, which is the subject of the following section.

Although much more could be said about A.'s blogs in themselves, the intention here is not to provide in-depth description or analysis of the blogs per se, but rather to draw out those features which are relevant to the analysis of how her blogs, and associated communication and events, constitute local content. In this way, A.'s blogs and the content published on them represent an 'entry point' to an exploration of a broader communicative ecology of self-publication activities and their promotion, undertaken by A., in which she territorially embeds her own content but also produces a networked form of locality that links her place of residence in Maré to other urban periphery neighbourhoods and the city, as well as a thematic locality associated with cultural production which is marginal to the mainstream. To reflect this, the sections which follow focus in selectively on relevant aspects of A.'s blogs and other areas of her activities.

Framing the favela/framed by the favela: Territorial embedding in the sidebar

In this section, I turn my attention specifically to A.'s role as a favela resident producing and publishing content that represents place, both on the internet and in print. As the discussion

above implies, by content I do not mean only, or even principally, literary texts or commentary published as actual blog posts, but also what I call 'framing' content or text. Examples of such content include profile information and other text, images and links included in the header, footer, and sidebar of the blogs. Moody (2008: 103) has noted that it is not only posts themselves that are significant for textual analysis of blogs, but also the 'variety of other texts surrounding that post: banners, taglines, side-bars, footers, blogrolls, links, and a host of other blog elements'. In print formats, this 'paratext' (Gray 2008) may also include biographies, blurbs, dedications, prefaces, and so on. However, building on the case I made in the preceding section, I will also include visual aspects in my analysis of framing content.

The aim of this section is to show the strong territorial embeddedness of A.'s content, despite the many translocal connections which both stimulate and result from the publication of her content. Embeddedness has also been highlighted by other scholars researching internet content production, as noted in chapter 1. However, as I pointed out there, drawing on the work of Miller and Slater (2000: 4), territorial embeddedness in this context does not only mean the explicit referencing of geographical place in content, but can also be understood as the way people encounter and use digital technologies in and from particular places. These may have an additional symbolic dimension, as in the case of the particular position occupied by favelas in the territoriality and popular imagination of Rio de Janeiro, as sites of violence, crime and poverty which somehow put at risk the development of the city.

In early June 2009, when I first came into contact with A.'s main blog and began saving screenshots, its right-hand column included information which clearly situated or affirmed its author as a favela resident and pointed to her investment in generating her own representations of the favela. The blog's profile information, under the heading '*Quem sou eu*' (Who I am'), read as follows:

> *Sou aprendiz da vida, aspirante à escritora, estudante entusiasmada e feliz por opção. Estudante de Letras da Universidade [...]. Tenho orgulho de dizer que sou moradora do Complexo de Favelas da Maré e desejo mostrar, com a publicação dos meus textos, que nas favelas cariocas também se produz arte, poesia e beleza (e não apenas marginais).* (Blog content, retrieved 25 June 2009)[295]

The first half of this profile information introduces A. without any reference to place (other than to the university where she studies), presenting personal, educational and literary

[295] 'I'm an apprentice of life, an aspiring writer, an enthusiastic student and happy by choice. I study Modern Languages at the [...] University. I am proud to call myself a resident of the Maré favela complex and by publishing my texts I want to show that Rio's favelas also produce art, poetry and beauty (and not just criminals)'.

attributes. In the third and final sentence, which makes up more than half of the profile, however, she tells readers not only that she lives in Maré, but that she is proud of this. She explains her desire to counter stereotypes through her texts and uses the plural form of the noun *marginal*, which is charged with meaning in contemporary Brazil. Employed frequently by the media, police and middle classes to refer to those involved in the drugs trade and associated criminal activities, this noun (which can also be used as an adjective) is in turn associated with favelas and their residents in general (Perlman 2004; Roth-Gordon 2009). As Roth-Gordon explains:

> Struggles over urban space, resources, social hierarchy, and national belonging are read and reproduced through the socially and politically significant categories of victim and criminal, marginal and citizen. In a recursive pattern, the elite and middle class describe favelas as marginal places (occupied by marginal people) to defend their own citizenship status, whereas favela residents themselves make sharp distinctions between deserving *trabalhadores* (workers) and dangerous *bandidos* (bandits) (Caldeira 2000; Scheper-Hughes 2006). Within this 'new' marginality, criminality and vulnerability redefine the terms of Brazilian citizenship. And yet this new order overlaps with old ideas of privilege in a country that has always recognized varying levels of citizenship. (2009: 58-59)

However, it is also worth noting, for its relevance to the discussion of marginal literature later in this chapter, that the term *marginal* also appears affirmatively in Brazilian hip hop and funk music, 'as a bad/good/tough thing – almost a black-pride spin-off, a call to rise up in revolt' (Perlman 2004: 124).[296] This reflects the shift from territorial stigmatisation to territorial affirmation of favelas and similar areas that was discussed in chapter 3.

Geographical place, and territorial affirmation, is given even greater prominence on A.'s writing blog in two blocks of static framing content which appeared about three quarters of the way down its right-hand sidebar for a time during fieldwork (blog content, retrieved 28 July 2009). The images and text used there reinforced not only A.'s identity as a resident of a favela, but also her status as a resident of the city of Rio de Janeiro, thereby asserting the favela as part of the city and A.'s claim to belonging to both spaces, her 'right to the city' (Lefebvre 1996 cited in Holston 2009: 247-248). It also evidenced two different scales of geographic locality, which were juxtaposed with the thematic locality of the many literary references present in the other framing content on the blog at the time, thereby illustrating how individuals can imagine and inhabit different empirical scales of locality, as suggested by

[296] Peçanha do Nascimento (2009: 319) notes the connection established between marginality and the periphery in São Paulo's marginal literature: '*É importante observar, então, a relação metonímica entre marginalidade e periferia, fruto das conexões trazidas com esses termos no contexto da urbanização brasileira, tendo em vista que para tais autores ser morador da periferia é vivenciar situações de marginalidade social e cultural*' ['It is important to note, therefore, the metonymic relationship between marginality and periphery, the fruit of the connections made between these terms in the context of Brazilian urbanisation, bearing in mind that for such authors, to be a resident of the periphery is to experience situations of social and cultural marginality'].

Appadurai. The particular example of framing content I will discuss incorporates explicit engagement with geographical place through textual and visual elements, refers to mainstream cultural representations of the city and the favela (in this case, song lyrics), and demonstrates the bricolage that characterises A.'s customisation of the blog format. It is divided into two sections, each of which includes photographs and text.

The first of the two sections of this framing content from the blog sidebar was headed '*Minha cidade maravilhosa*',[297] and presented an idyllic and widely-disseminated image of Rio de Janeiro: the city at night, as seen from the top of the Christ the Redeemer statue, looking down on the Sugar Loaf hill in the middle of Guanabara Bay and the middle class neighbourhoods located on the bay's edge. This postcard-like image[298] was followed by the opening verses of Fernanda Abreu's '*Rio 40 Graus*',[299] which point to the contradictions inherent in this packaging of the city, and in particular the urban corruption and violence which it overlooks:

Rio 40 graus
Cidade maravilha
Purgatório da beleza
E do caos...

Capital do sangue quente
Do Brasil
Capital do sangue quente
Do melhor e do pior
Do Brasil...

Cidade sangue quente
Maravilha mutante...

O Rio é uma cidade
De cidades misturadas
O Rio é uma cidade
De cidades camufladas
Com governos misturados
Camuflados, paralelos

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297 Rio de Janeiro's nickname is 'the wonderful city', a slogan often exploited in tourist advertising, but also used both affectionately and ironically by residents and visitors to the city. Note the use of the possessive adjective 'my' here, showing ownership and belonging.

298 As Jaguaribe and Hetherington (2004: 155) note, 'Rio can lay claim to fame as one of the most celebrated spaces in the global imaginary of tourist pleasure sites. The beaches of Copacabana and Ipanema, the dramatic landscape into which a modernist city appears to have grown as abundantly as the tropical vegetation, the Art Deco *Christ the Redeemer* statue on Corcovado mountain that looks out over the city, samba dancing, night life, and especially Carnival, are all used to signify Rio as a desirable tourist place to play'.

299 Lyrics by Fernanda Abreu, Fausto Fawcett and Carlos Laufer. The song was released in 1992. Note that *Rio 40°* is also the title of a classic 1954 film by Brazilian director Nelson Pereira dos Santos. Its main characters are favela residents.

Sorrateiros
Ocultando comandos...[300]

Fernanda Abreu is a singer from a middle-class background known for combining different musical influences, including *funk carioca,* associated with Rio's suburbs and favelas.[301] In a release for Abreu's 2000 album *Entidade Urbana,* Hermano Vianna (2000), the Rio-based anthropologist and cultural producer who was mentioned in chapter 3, notes that the song '*Rio 40 graus*' almost beat world-famous bossa nova songs and a Rio carnival standard in a people's poll to choose the song which best represented the city.[302] It can therefore be considered an informal or alternative anthem for the city, one which engages with its complexity rather than celebrating its stereotypes.

The lower section of this block of framing content, located immediately below the one already discussed, was headed '*Meu universo – Favela da Maré'.*[303] It again combined a photograph with song lyrics. In this case, the photograph offered a street-level view of the favela, showing people walking and cycling in a commercial area, with shop displays and signs and parked cars visible along the edges of the street. In the foreground, at the top of the photograph, cables and wires appear strung along the sides of the street and across it, and a hand-painted advertising banner can be seen, of the kind widely used in favelas to announce cultural and social events.[304] The background is dominated by low-rise buildings with washing and water storage tanks visible on their roofs. In other words, the photograph presents an everyday scene in the favela, which I have seen for myself when I have visited the area.[305] As with the section on Rio, this picture was followed by an extract from relevant song lyrics, in this case part of '*Alagados*' by the band Paralamas do Sucesso, from their

[300] '40-degree Rio / Wonderful city / Purgatory of beauty / And chaos... /
Hot-tempered capital / Of Brazil / Hot-tempered capital / Of the best and the worst / Of Brazil... /
Hot-tempered city / Mutating wonder... /
Rio is a city / A mixture of cities / Rio is a city / Of camouflaged cities / With a mixture of governments /
Camouflaged, parallel / Underhand / Concealing commands'

[301] For an in-depth look at Fernanda Abreu and her work, see Moehn (2008).

[302] Vianna does not provide further details of the poll, such as when it took place or who organised it.

[303] 'My universe – the Maré favela'

[304] I have not been able to locate a study specifically on the use of such banners as a means of communication in the favela, but they can be considered part of the local 'communicative ecology'.

[305] Note that this photo was also used in a version of the text analysed in chapter 4, republished after the blog where it originally appeared migrated to a new version hosted at its own domain. I searched for the photo using the name of the favela in Google Images and also found the same image illustrating a piece on a journalist's blog in January 2010 illustrating a story about a shoot-out between the police and drug traffickers in the favela. No additional information (e.g. who took it when or what it shows) is provided about the photograph in any of these postings.

1986 album *Selvagem?*,[306] which name-checks Maré alongside other (in)famous shantytowns in Brazil and Jamaica:

> *Todo dia o sol da manhã*
> *Vem e lhes desafia*
> *Traz do sonho pro mundo*
> *Quem já não o queria*
> *Palafitas, trapiches, farrapos*
> *Filhos da mesma agonia*
> *E a cidade que tem braços abertos*
> *Num cartão postal*
> *Com os punhos fechados na vida real*
> *Lhe nega oportunidades*
> *Mostra a face dura do mal*
>
> *Alagados, Trenchtown, Favela da Maré*
> *A esperança não vem do mar*
> *Nem das antenas de TV*
> *A arte de viver da fé*
> *Só não se sabe fé em quê*
> *A arte de viver da fé*
> *Só não se sabe fé em quê*[307]

The juxtaposition of the cliché version of Rio with the city's more complex reality, as expressed in Fernanda Abreu's lyrics, is repeated here in the excerpt from the second song. A contrast is established between the welcoming open arms of the Christ the Redeemer statue, the symbol by which Rio is globally recognised, and the 'closed fists'[308] which, according to the lyrics, often characterise interactions in the city in real life. Alongside the localised reference to Maré, the lyrics of '*Alagados*' also draw attention to the commonalities between shantytowns in different parts of Brazil and abroad, especially in the phrase '*filhos da mesma agonia*'.[309] In this respect, the lyrics raise the issue of what A. conceptualises as the shared vision of the periphery, or from the margins, which is a strong feature of her activities on the internet and in print, as later sections of this chapter will show.

The use of this image and song lyrics relating to Maré in the blog's framing text underneath the block of content about Rio also serves to position it firmly in the geographical, social and

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[306] '*Alagados*' appeared as number 63 in a feature on the 100 greatest Brazilian songs in the Brazilian edition of *Rolling Stone* magazine in October 2009. It is described there as '*um hino para as classes oprimidas, mas com irresistível apelo pop*' ['a hymn for the oppressed classes, but with irresistible pop appeal'] (Miyazawa 2009).

[307] 'Every day the morning sun / Rises to challenge them / Plucks from dreams into the world / Those who no longer wish it / Houses on stilts, piers, rags / Children of the same affliction / And the city with open arms / On a postcard / Closes its fists in real life / Denies them opportunities / Shows the hard face of evil / Alagados / Trenchtown, the favela of Maré / Hope does not come from the sea / Nor from the TV antennas / The art of living on faith / You just don't know faith in what / The art of living on faith / You just don't know faith in what'

[308] '*punhos fechados*'

[309] 'children of the same affliction'

cultural landscape of the city, rather than as a space representing the opposite or antithesis of the city. It also points to the complexity and, at the same time, the compatibility of the relationships between different urban spaces and identities (i.e. the feeling of belonging to both the city and a particular favela). The two perspectives on the city presented in the photographs, from above and from the streets, also bring to mind Michel de Certeau's (1984) discussion of the voyeuristic and distancing 'panorama-city' (exemplified by the view from the 110th floor of the World Trade Centre in New York, or Medieval and Renaissance paintings which presented an imagined vision of the city), and the city as experienced by 'ordinary practitioners', on foot. As he writes, '[t]he panorama-city is a "theoretical" (that is, visual) simulacrum, in short a picture, whose condition of possibility is an oblivion and a misunderstanding of practices' (De Certeau 1984: 93). Ordinary people, on the other hand, write the city through their everyday, walking practices. Indeed, De Certeau's (1984: 93) vision of how '[t]he networks of these moving, intersecting writings compose a manifold story that has neither author nor spectator, shaped out of fragments of trajectories and alterations of spaces' could also arguably be applied to the flows of user-generated local content on the internet and how ordinary practitioners such as A. are engaged in rewriting and reframing the city from below. The idea that there is neither an author nor a spectator for the story composed by these practitioners could be stretched to refer to the blurring of the roles of producer and consumer in the contemporary new media environment, encapsulated in the figure of the 'produser' (Bruns 2007). Indeed, the juxtaposition of representations of urban space and places from mainstream Brazilian popular music, photographs sourced from the web, and A.'s own framing content produced in her customisation of the blog format and the addition of the titles described above can be viewed as bricolage. For Mark Deuze (2006: 66), alongside participation and remediation, bricolage is a principal component of digital culture, and refers to how users 'reflexively assemble [their] own particular versions of [...] reality' (Deuze 2006: 66). In the sidebar content I have analysed, we see A. using and customising a web 2.0 platform to assemble a version of reality that reflects the plural and overlapping forms of locality she imagines and experiences in her everyday practices.

This framing content also reflects textual and visual efforts by A. to foreground and resignify her geographical origins as a favela resident, and a resident of a particular named favela, both considered 'marginal', but she also goes beyond this to position that favela, and herself, as part of the city as a whole, in all its contradictions. In this way, the content evidences territorial affirmation, a recurrent theme throughout this thesis, but also a concrete realisation of Jaguaribe and Hetherington's (2004: 165) account of what happens in the encounter

between representations of the city and of the favela, and how these can result in 'shifting mental maps that lie outside conventional urban imageries'. In its naming and reference of a specific favela complex, Maré, it also reminds us of Carvalho Lopes' (2009) discussion of the new cartography which results from similar practices in the lyrics of funk music. My observations of favela residents publishing local content on blogs and other internet platforms have revealed that they, like funk artists, are involved in a symbolic remapping and resignification of urban space in Rio de Janeiro, and this can clearly be seen in this example of sidebar content from A.'s blog. As I have already explained, one common stimulus for this resignification has been the predominance of mainstream representations of favelas that serve to stigmatise these areas. I focused particularly on the media in chapter 3, but favelas have also been represented in music, as the lyrics discussed above show, as well as cinema (Pereira Leite 2005; Bentes 2007b; Chan & Vitali 2010; Freire-Medeiros 2011) and literature (Williams 2008). A. incorporated two examples of external cultural representations in the content bricolage discussed above, but also critiqued others when I interviewed her. In the following section, I therefore consider how A. explicitly seeks to counter these external representations of favelas in her internet content and related activities.

Countering external representations

While it is beyond the scope of this thesis to look at the full range of cultural representations of favelas which exist, one of those which has achieved the highest degree of international visibility in recent times is the film *Cidade de Deus* (*City of God*) from 2002.[310] It was specifically mentioned by A. as we discussed external perspectives on favelas, as an example of a cultural product that reinforced negative perceptions of favelas as spaces dominated by violence. As this extract from our conversation shows, it is seeing favelas portrayed in this way which motivates her to produce and share her own, alternative representations, which are here expressed with reference to the writing competition that she had recently set up:

> *A.: Eu não sei se a grande mídia ela tem algum tipo de preocupação ou desejo de conhecer alguma coisa nossa. Por isso que o [concurso], eu acho que eu estou querendo meio que enfiar guela baixo... Tipo, como eu vou dizer, forçar um pouco a barra, assim, para as pessoas verem que é diferente, entendeu... é diferente a maneira como a gente vive aqui. O filme, aquele filme do.. do Zé Galinha, como é que era, o Zé Pequeno...ay, eu esqueci.*
> *Researcher:* Cidade de Deus.

[310] This film is discussed in several of the film references cited at the end of the previous section.

> A.: Cidade de Deus, *isso. Tá. Ótimo. Beleza. Mas assim, tem mais, gente. Tem assim, tem muito mais. Não é só aquilo. Aquilo é o feio. É o lado A, lado B. Como um disco, lado A, lado B. É o lado B.* (interview, 19 January 2010)[311]

Violence, then, is presented by her as the 'B side' of life in the favela. Rather than the 'main attraction', she is reframing violence as something less important, that does not necessarily fit well with the overall narrative. The 'A side' of life in the favela, she suggested, should be the examples of solidarity and collaboration she discussed at length in our conversation; these, she felt, revealed the side of the favela which is overlooked in external representations. For instance, she talked about '*bater a laje*', an example of what Holston (1991) has termed 'autoconstruction', when groups of neighbours get together in a working party to help a family in cementing the roof (*laje*) of their house for use as a leisure space or as the foundation for an additional storey, with food and drink supplied by the host family.[312] She also described the solidarity and practical assistance (such as a lift to the hospital) commonly offered when a local resident is ill and requires medical treatment,[313] and mentioned different cultural activities taking place in Maré, such as a carnival band (*bloco*), an outdoors cineclub, theatre and dance groups. Reinforcing the message of her blog profile information cited earlier in this chapter, she explained that her interest in publicising information about local events or activities such as these was to draw attention to the creative and constructive side of life in the favela, to its cultural capital:

> *eu gosto de colocar isso no blog para mostrar que dentro da favela não tem só o marginal, não tem só a violência. Também tem arte, tem cultura, tem gente que se esforça, que trabalha, e que busca, e que quer. Tem gente interessada também em estar fazendo diferença dentro do lugar. Eu acho que a intenção de colocar essas coisas é mais essa, de mostrar que não é só isso. A gente é mais um pouquinho.* (interview, 19 January 2010)[314]

Reflecting this, during the course of the observations carried out for this research, A. posted details of local events on several occasions. For example, she reproduced electronic posters

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311 'A.: I don't know if the mainstream media has any concern or desire to find out about what we are up to here. That's why with [the competition] I think I kind of want to stick it down their throats... I mean, how can I put it, push things a bit so that people see that it's different, you know, that we live differently here. That film, that film with... Zé Galinha, what was its name, with Li'l Zé... oh, I can't remember.
Researcher: *City of God.*
A.: *City of God*, that's it. Right. Great. Wonderful. But you know, there's more, folks. There's more, a lot more. It's not just like that. That's the ugly side. It's the A side, the B side. Like on a record, A side, B side. That's the B side.'

312 The significance of the *laje* in Rio's favelas was the theme of a documentary, *Depois rola o mocotó*, shown at the International Ethnographic Film Festival in Rio de Janeiro in 2009, which included a *mutirão* (the word used in Brazil to refer to this kind of collective, voluntary working party) among its scenes. Further information, including a link to a trailer on YouTube, is available from the film's blog (Depois rola o mocotó n.d.).

313 The struggles involved in seeking medical care for a sick child are the theme of one of A.'s short stories.

314 'I like to put that on the blog to show that the favela doesn't only contain criminals, doesn't only contain violence. There is also art, culture, there are people who are making an effort, who work, who are seeking, who want things. There are people interested in making a difference in the place. I think the reason for putting these things there is more about showing that it's not just about all of that. There's a little more to us than that.'

for events at an emerging, self-managed venue in the favela in the footer of her writing blog, including one for an event incorporating a poetry reading, which asked for book donations for the venue's library. She published a poster for a *feijoada*[315] held by the local carnival band to raise money for the purchase of instruments, this time as an actual post on her competitions and events blog. On that same blog, she also published (again as a post in the main body of the blog) a poster for an event hosted by a local NGO to discuss public security issues from a local perspective, part of a preparatory process for a national conference on the subject. However, overall, it must be said that this reposting of local content that explicitly related to the favela where she lived represented a relatively small proportion of the content published by A. over the course of my research, whether in actual posts or in the framing text on her blogs. The main focus of her content was on literary texts, information and links and on the promotion of her work as a writer and her publications; she also posted details of events taking place in locations other than the favela on several occasions.[316]

In fact, A.'s poems and short stories rarely, if at all, make any identifiable reference to specific places. However, Avenida Brasil, a major expressway in Rio de Janeiro which connects the port area with the north and west zones of the city (running through many neighbourhoods, including Maré), is mentioned in two poems. One, published on A.'s blog and in her book, mentions Avenida Brasil as the place where a character finds a stolen car. Another mentions the traffic congestion that is common on the expressway. However, despite this general lack of identifiable places in A.'s literary work, it is my contention that her content is nonetheless strongly localised or territorially embedded via the framing content on her blogs, in particular her profile information and the other examples of content mentioned above, such as the sidebar I analysed in more detail. This content clearly serves to situate her and the content she published as originating from a particular geographical location.[317] Through these different 'framings' of her work, and the emphasis A. chooses to give to her place of residence, her internet content creation is therefore thoroughly embedded in the favela, and vice versa. This is also true for her print work, via the biographical information supplied in the blurbs, dedications and prefaces of the print publications where her work has

[315] *Feijoada* is a typical carioca stew of pork and black beans, served with rice, manioc flour, kale and slices of orange. The term is also used for a gathering at which the dish is served.

[316] A.'s comments in interview about her motivation for publishing content about activities in her neighbourhood on the blog would seem to imply that the intended or actual audience for these pieces of content is more likely to be external to the favela, but this is an assumption and data was not collected about the readership of the blog, about which A. may well not have accurate information herself (although she does use a hit counter on her blog).

[317] Mitra (2008) argues that bloggers produce space by writing about real spaces, by providing spatial commentary, or by making reference to a place in support of a particular argument. Alternatively, a blog may not make any spatial references, but nonetheless create space via the use of language and images.

appeared, which I discuss in the section headed 'Literary texts: Themes and the construction of locality'. More than just a framing of her work, A.'s explicit framing of *herself* on the internet and in print as a university student, a teacher and a writer who is also an enthusiastic and passionate resident of an area of the city often associated with violence and poverty, also represents an attempt to reframe the favela.[318] As well as showing that the favela is a site of literary production and cultural capital, she puts herself forward to show that it is a place that produces university students and writers, engaged in generating their own representations. In this way she territorially embeds not only her content, but also herself.

The discussion will now turn to A.'s promotion and dissemination of print publications using the internet and related technologies, and then to the writing competition she organised, which had a dual goal of bringing other local writers to prominence and highlighting locally-originating representations of the favela in contrast to those generated by external sources. Her use of a range of internet platforms to publicise her work, as well as her decision to publish both on the internet and in print reveals how she attempts to reach multiple audiences that might be local to her work in different ways, both geographically or because of a shared interest.

Print publications and their internet-based dissemination and promotion

In mid-2009 a short story by A. was selected for inclusion in a collection of crime short stories published by a small, relatively new Rio-based publisher specialising in new authors. Authors did not pay to have their stories included in the volume, but were encouraged to sell on a certain number of copies, available to them at a discounted price. A.'s entry in the 'Authors' section at the end of the book, like the sidebar content discussed earlier, identified her as both *carioca* and resident of the Complexo da Maré. The explicit naming of the neighbourhood where she lives is similar to the approach observed by Peçanha do Nascimento (2009: 45) in her analysis of the biographical information supplied about writers in two of *Caros Amigos* magazine's supplements on *literatura marginal*, part of a series of publications which were key milestones in the development of this movement in São Paulo.

[318] This self-framing is an example of what Leander and McKim (2003: 235) call '[d]iscursive constructions of situated selves', which take place online and offline and can include 'biographies and self-descriptions of various sorts, photographs and sketches of the self, images of self-related artifacts (homes, automobiles, family members), unique graphics, national flags and family shields on personal web pages, house fronts, and business cards, and "quotable quotes" indexing ethos and identity that are attached to office doors and e-mail signature files'.

The biographies in question provided the name of the neighbourhoods where authors lived or the prison where they were serving time, to reinforce the fact that contributors were residents of the urban periphery or prisoners. It is worth noting, however, that despite the emphasis on her place of residence in her biographical information in the crime fiction collection, the story by A. included there does not take place in a favela setting, but rather in a block of flats in Copacabana, a middle-class neighbourhood of Rio. As I have already observed, she only rarely locates her literary texts in her own neighbourhood, despite her efforts to territorially embed her writing through the biographical information she provides about herself.

A's own promotion of the crime book which contained her story included sending out group emails and posting the press release for the book on her blog, as well as including its cover image in the right-hand column of her blog instructing those interested in buying the book to contact her, and posting the invitation to the launch event, organised by the publisher, in the blog footer. In another attempt at territorial embedding through dissemination targeted at a particular audience, she also posted details of the book's launch event in at least one Orkut community relating to Maré. She invited members of that community to attend the event in support of a local writer, and provided details of how to purchase a copy of the book, should they so wish. This involved depositing the cost of the book plus the relevant postage in A.'s bank account, emailing a scanned version of the deposit receipt to her and receiving the book via the post, or in my case, collecting it from her in person in Maré. After the launch, she included photographs from the event in a slideshow in the sidebar of her writing blog.

A few months later, she adopted some similar approaches in publicising and promoting her first (self-funded) solo book, produced using the services of an on-demand publisher she found via the internet, which publishes books in small quantities. In this case she had virtually no institutional support. She sent out several mass emails about the book, and posted information about it in the forum of the Orkut community already used to promote the crime collection, as well as in one of the writing sites she participates in on the internet. She included the book's cover image in the right-hand column of her blogs, with the price and a contact email address. She also posted the book's preface, written by a former teacher of hers from the *pré-vestibular* course, and developed a YouTube video trailer for the book. She used her computer to produce an invitation (distributed by email and posted on her writing blog) about the launch event for the book, which was held at a public library in a northern Rio suburb – this venue was arranged thanks to a friend she met via the blog, who knew the director of the library. In fact, as the result of this connection, A.'s book launch was included

in the listings for a city-wide programme of events in support of reading, organised by Rio's municipal administration. It was also publicised via two local news websites for the suburban neighbourhood where the library was located, later linked from A.'s blog in her media coverage section. A. also set up a designated Orkut community for her book and again posted photographs of the launch event on her blog as well as on her personal Orkut page.

These approaches to publication and distribution are similar to those adopted by *literatura marginal* authors from São Paulo studied by Peçanha do Nascimento (2009). Many of the writers involved in the movement published their texts for the first time (at least to a broader audience) via *Caros Amigos* and developed connections and networks (friendships, joint activities) that lasted beyond the print publication. However, even to people who are part of the contemporary São Paulo-based grouping that is the focus of Peçanha do Nascimento's study, the term *literatura marginal* means different things, and given the anthropological orientation of her research she was interested precisely in these native understandings of the term. Unlike other applications of the term (which she notes are almost always problematic),[319] the key feature of the current movement in São Paulo, according to Peçanha do Nascimento, is that the writers in question self-attribute the term *literatura marginal*, even if they understand the phrase in different ways and also use other terminology to describe their work and what they do. Some of their themes are shared by other contemporary writers, but what distinguishes the work of the São Paulo-based authors and other like them is that they are engaged in self-representation:

> The authors who published in the special editions dealt with here distinguish themselves from the rest because they are also actors from the spaces portrayed in their texts and, therefore, marginal subjects who are inserting their social experiences into the cultural landscape. It is not a case, for the writers who were studied, simply of representing a certain reality of spaces or subjects in literary form, but rather of how they wish to represent themselves. (Peçanha do Nascimento 2009: 76)[320]

This idea of 'marginal subjects who are inserting their social experiences into the cultural landscape' aptly describes A. not only as a writer of literary texts, but also as a creator of local content on the internet which puts forward her representations of her own favela, and

[319] These include: literary works produced and distributed outside of editorial market, those that do not fit with or set up an opposition to established canons, works authored by those from marginal groups, those that focus on subjects and spaces held to be marginal.

[320] *'os autores que publicaram nas edições especiais aqui abordadas se distinguem dos demais porque são também atores dos espaços retratados nos textos e, portanto, sujeitos marginais que estã inserindo suas experiências sociais no plano cultural. Não se tratando, no caso dos escritores estudados, apenas da representação de certa realidade de espaços e sujeitos na literatura, mas do modo como querem se autorrepresentar'*

favelas in general. As I have shown above, she also shares the São Paulo writers' concern with self-representation.

All three of the *literatura marginal* authors considered in depth by Peçanha do Nascimento – Ferréz, Sérgio Vaz, and Sacolinha – began their literary careers with independent publications. Both Ferréz and Sérgio Vaz gained sponsorship to fund their first book, from local businesses, but were still personally involved in publicising and selling copies via talks, literary fairs, cultural projects and the internet. More similar to A.'s experience is that of Sacolinha, who published his first book after appearing in the third edition of the *Caros Amigos* supplement on *literatura marginal* edited by Ferréz. His book was self-funded, with support from his family, and sold via a blog, via the post and in some bookshops in his local area. However, there are also similarities between these authors and the practices of emerging Brazilian writers in general, who are making intensive use of web technologies in literary production and circulation and thus gaining independence from traditional mediators of editorial success and literary legitimacy (Resende 2010). Indeed, as researcher Heloísa Buarque de Hollanda (2010: 7) has emphasised, there is more common ground than one might imagine between the Brazilian literary scene as it comes into contact with digital technologies and the internet, and the literary and artistic production of the Brazilian urban peripheries, because both 'are structurally critical and innovative and raise profound intellectual questions about the epistemological models and values of modern artistic production'.[321] Peçanha do Nascimento (2009: 31) notes that blogs were a key resource in her research into *literatura marginal* in São Paulo, giving her access to biographical information about the writers, their diaries, their networks, and their opinions. Media and organisations associated with hip hop also played a role in disseminating authors and the *literatura marginal* movement in general.

In the case of A.'s own literary work, the decision to publish her texts in print format, rather than sticking to internet-based publication, came after she received many requests for a book from readers of her work. She drew parallels between herself and other people producing cultural works outside of the mainstream and making use of the internet to gain a following, mentioning a singer she got to know on MySpace who shared her music via the internet and had also released a CD:

[321] '*são estruturalmente críticas e inovadoras trazendo, para o centro da cena intelectual, interpelações de fundo no que se referem aos modelos e valores da epistemologia e da produção artística modernas.*'

O MySpace, tem sido legal porque eu tenho conhecido artistas diferentes... artistas assim, que como eu, não têm espaço na mídia grande, mas dentro da internet se tornaram notórios, vamos dizer assim. [...] ela me contou, que o CD dela foi lançado e [...] está acontecendo por conta da lei de incentivo à cultura. Porque ela também é independente, ela não tem gravadora, ela não tem nada. (interview, 19 January 2010)[322][323]

Here we can see how A. has established a connection which is not at all place-based via the internet, but rather oriented around a shared interest or activity in cultural production outside of the mainstream, in this case via the social network site MySpace. Returning to blogs, which are the tools used primarily by A., Heriberto Yépez (2003: n.p.) has noted that they can provide a space for self-publication by amateur or emerging authors who might not otherwise, due to the length, ideological slant, themes or language of their texts, be able to publish their work via conventional literary channels, including print. However, he believes blogs should not simply be a refuge, but should rather serve to exert pressure on literary gate-keepers, encouraging them to open up and adjust to these new developments. In this way,

> [t]he weblog represents an increase in the power of the author. For example, to give early access to work that the editorial system holds back in observance of market rules. Or to test out drafts on real readers. Or to use her/his site as publicity for print publications. Or to take advantage of the space so as not to have to wait to be interviewed about this or that success. At any moment, the author, for the first time in history, can publish what she/he wants at the time that she/he decides. (Yépez 2003: n.p.)[324]

Carlsen (2009) makes a similar point about online narrative, analysing the case of Brazilian sex worker Raquel Pacheco, also known as Bruna Surfistinha, who leveraged the success of her blog and resulting media interest and controversy to negotiate a deal to publish its content as a print memoir. Carlsen (2009: 33) observes that 'The book is a demonstration of a marginalized subject finding a public for her writing by using the technology of global capitalism and using public attention to take advantage of the rewards normally offered to print authors'. Although there are clearly different scales to this phenomenon, and Bruna Surfistinha is a particularly high-profile example (who gained access to the mainstream publishing market), it is worth drawing out the suggestion not only that self-publication on the internet may, for some, lead to print opportunities and legitimacy, but also that self-publishing in print is becoming more accessible and widespread due to advances in digital technologies (Bradley 2011), including in Brazil (see Barbosa 2009).

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[322] 'MySpace has been really great because I've got to know different artists... artists, like, who like me, don't get coverage in the mainstream media, but within the internet, they've developed a following, let's put it like that. [...] she told me that her CD has been launched and [..,] is happening because of the cultural incentive law. Because she's independent too, she doesn't have a record label, she doesn't have anything'.

[323] Cultural incentive laws exist at federal, state and municipal level in Brazil, and allow corporations (often state-owned companies such as Petrobras) and individuals to allocate a certain approved percentage of their tax bills to fund cultural initiatives. For a critical analysis of the current system see chapter six of McCann (2008).

[324] My translation from the original Spanish.

Reflecting on her own experience with print self-publishing, A. reported in April 2010 that she had already sold close to 300 copies of her book and saw advantages in her internet-based, independent approach:

> *Hoje são quase 300 cópias vendidas. Número que considero muito bom tendo em vista que produzi e vendi sozinha. Usei apenas a internet para isso. No final do semestre passado deixei alguns exemplares com o livreiro da faculdade que curso e alguns outros com outro livreiro de um bairro próximo. Na verdade eles ainda não venderam quase nada. Sozinha, diante da tela, alcancei leitores que de forma convencional talvez jamais alcançasse. Vendi livros para o Uruguai, Paraguai, Argentina, Venezuela, Chile e Espanha. No Brasil vendi um para o Estado do Pará, alguns outros em quatro estados do nordeste: Paraíba, Ceará, Bahia e Pernambuco. Um no estado do Mato Grosso. Em todos os estados da região sul e sudeste há pelo menos um [name of book]. E na Maré 40 livros estão espalhados. Também doei alguns exemplares a bibliotecas públicas de comunidades cariocas.* (Email interview, 27 April 2010)[325]

This commentary reveals how a literary work which A. explicitly sought to territorially embed when framing and promoting both the book itself and herself as its author has achieved translocal circulation. However, it has also sold and been distributed in Maré itself, as well as in other favelas. A. believes the fact that she maintained three different blogs with a slightly different focus meant that she was able to reach different readerships, and that this was a factor in the number of copies of the book sold via the internet. Certainly, the wide geographic scope of A.'s book sales is impressive, and can be considered a reflection of her mobilisation of both geographically *and* thematically local connections, with the latter (around literature) being particularly effective.

The sales to Spanish speaking countries also reflect the fact that she is studying Spanish at university, and makes use of the internet to expand her knowledge of Hispanic language and culture. As she commented in interview, she uses the internet to satisfy her curiosity and desire to learn about cultures other than her own, going beyond what is local to her:

> *o meu interesse na internet é esse. Conhecer pessoas, conhecer culturas. Eu não quero ficar, ser aquela pessoa que, tipo, nasci aqui, vou morrer aqui, e só conheço isso aqui, né, como, o Mario Quintana. Mario Quintana, eu adoro Mario Quintana, mas assim, ele tem um nacionalismo muito exacerbado para o meu gosto. Ele não se permite conhecer outras culturas que não a nossa. Claro, a nossa é muito rica, eu tenho muito que aprender dentro do meu país, mas assim eu também queria aprender outras coisas, sabe, eu tenho uma sede*

[325] 'So far I've sold almost 300 copies. I consider this number to be very good given I produced and sold the book myself. I used only the internet for this purpose. At the end of last semester I left some copies of the book with the bookseller at my university and a few others with another bookseller in a nearby neighbourhood. In fact they have hardly sold any so far. On my own, in front of the screen, I reached readers who I might never have reached in the conventional way. I have sold books to Uruguay, Paraguay, Argentina, Venezuela, Chile and Spain. In Brazil I've sold one copy to someone in Pará state, a few others in four states in the north-east: Paraíba, Ceará, Bahia and Pernambuco. One in the state of Mato Grosso. And in all the states of the south and south-east regions there is at least one [name of book]. And in Maré there are 40 copies scattered about. I also donated some copies to public libraries in Rio favelas.'

muito grande de aprender coisas, de ver coisas. Eu acho que a internet ela me deu essa possibilidade de fazer isso. E escrever, e livro, e essas coisas, foram, acabando sendo consequencia, né, dessa minha busca de pessoas e coisas diferentes. (interview, 19 January 2010)[326]

Although she is very much concerned with the representation of locality in her internet content creation, she approaches the internet as an inherently translocal platform, but also channels the results of her translocal interactions back into activities which are related to her own local setting. For comparison and contextualisation it is interesting, once again, to refer to Peçanha do Nascimento's (2009: 140) account of the circulation and distribution of *literatura marginal* in São Paulo, which is described as being concentrated in specific locations: 'the periphery which was already the locus of production and the privileged scenario for the writers' texts was cemented as the target for circulating their works'.[327] Distribution channels in São Paulo have included cultural projects such as Cooperifa, 1daSul and Literatura no Brasil (organised by Sérgio Vaz, Ferréz and Sacolinha respectively)[328] and other circuits made possible by what Peçanha do Nascimento (2009: 88-106) calls 'extra-literary connections',[329] such as the hip hop movement and NGOs. Although A. is herself engaged in attempts to encourage place-based circulation of literary works, through the writing competition she initiated and organised in her own favela, and has some connections to other favela/periphery/suburban writers in Rio, she also claims affiliation, via her translocally oriented activities and references on the internet, to the online literary scene in Brazil and beyond, and this is reflected in the diversity of her readers.

[326] 'that is my interest in the internet. To get to know people, to get to know other cultures. I don't want to stay, to be that person, who, you know, I was born here, I'm going to die here, and I only know this place, like Mario Quintana [a Brazilian poet]. Mario Quintana, I love Mario Quintana, but, I mean, he's too nationalistic for my taste. He doesn't allow himself to get to know cultures other than ours. Of course, ours is very rich, and I still have a lot to learn within my own country, but, you know, I also want to learn other things, I have a very strong desire to learn things, to see things. I think the internet gave me the chance to do that. And my writing, the book, those things, they happened, they ended up being a consequence, you know, of my search for different people and things.'

[327] '*a periferia dos escritores que já aparecia como locus da produção e o cenário privilegiado dos textos se consolidou como alvo de circulação dos seus trabalhos*'

[328] For example, Cooperifa organised weekly *saraus* (poetry readings). Literatura no Brasil published texts by *literatura marginal* writers on its blog and in print format. For more on the activities of the three groups, see chapter 5 of Peçanha do Nascimento's book.

[329] '*conexões extraliterárias*'

Literary texts: Translocal themes and the role of an epitext in producing locality

This eclecticness, or refusal to be restricted to what is immediately at hand, can also be seen in the themes of the work collected in A.'s first solo book, which is dedicated to family, teachers and friends, and finally, to fellow residents of the favela complex where she lives and so explicitly writes from:

> *A todos os meninos e meninas, donas de casa, pais de família, trabalhadores... Enfim. A todos os moradores do meu querido Complexo da Maré, meu respeito e admiração por sua força e luta diária.*[330]

In the preface, A. describes how she selected the texts – a mixture of poems and short stories – for inclusion in the book, and the freedom that came from self-publication:

> *A princípio este livro seria uma compilação de poesias assim... Como direi... 'Sociais'?!... humm! Sei lá. Uma compilação de textos que retratassem as comunidades cariocas, sua beleza, sua gente, sua luta, sua força e etc. Mas como disse, descobri que sou hiperativa e penso mil coisas ao mesmo tempo. E nessa coisa de pensar e pensar, decidi por nesta coletânea outros textos que achei pertinentes. Afinal o livro é uma obra independente, não tem nenhuma grande editora me bancando e eu resolvi fazer o que eu bem quisesse. E pronto! Falei!*[331]

In the preface she lists the themes of the texts in the collection as '*minha homenagem a minha gente querida, da qual também faço parte, das favelas ou para os mais eruditos, dos espaços populares*',[332] as well as love, madness, social questions and sensuality. In practice, therefore, she went beyond the translocal but nonetheless place-based orientation she herself originally envisaged for the book.

However, coverage of the book launch by a journalist from an NGO in the favela where A. lives, published on the NGO's website (later linked to from A.'s blog), emphasised the place-based, and therefore local, aspects of the work.[333] This fits with the NGO's focus on local development. The article states that A. attended the *pré-vestibular* course run by the NGO and quotes the book's dedication to residents of the favela, as well as mentioning that A. has

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[330] 'To all the boys and girls, housewives, fathers, working people... Well. To all the residents of my beloved Complexo da Maré, my respect and admiration for your strength and everyday struggles.'

[331] 'In principle this book was going to be a compilation of ... How shall I put it? "Social"?! poems. Hmmm! I don't know. A compilation of texts portraying Rio's communities, their beauty, their people, their struggles, their strength, and etc. But as I said, I discovered that I am hyperactive and that I think about thousands of things at the same time. And while I was thinking and thinking, I decided to include other relevant texts in the collection. After all, it is an independent book, there is no big publisher paying for it and so I decided to do exactly as I liked. So there you go! I've said it!'

[332] 'my homage to my beloved people, which I'm also a part of, from the favelas or for the more erudite among you, from the *espaços populares*'.

[333] I have included this article in the research without seeking its author's consent, because I consider it to be institutional content and therefore public.

plans to launch the book locally at a library run by the NGO.[334] It provides links to two of A.'s blogs and her page on a writing website, and provides details of how to buy the book. It then reproduces the preface to the book by A.'s teacher from the *pré-vestibular* course followed by a mini-short story and a poem from the book. Both focus explicitly on issues of social injustice, and this is linked to violence in the case of the short story.

The short story is about a boy from the favela shot by the police; the first-person narrator describes the grief of a woman (presumably the boy's mother or another female relative) and the scene in the street, as a crowd stands looking at the boy's body. The narrator's account concludes by referencing the media's coverage of the incident and how it portrayed the boy as being linked to drug trafficking:[335]

> *Eu vi tudo isso, moço, mas não consegui chorar não. Isso foi meio-dia. Só chorei a noite, na hora do jornal quando o repórter falou assim: 'Ação da polícia mata menor envolvido com tráfico de drogas no morro...'*
>
> *Porra, moço, o neguinho era estudante... O moleque era estudante...*[336]

There have been several cases of innocent children or young people shot by the police in Maré (and in other favelas), which have resulted in protest marches and activism by friends and family members, NGOs and social movements.[337] Although the the short story does not specify its location, the selection of this text by the journalist working for a Maré-based NGO reinforces the idea that the text has local significance, and shows how a paratext, or in this specific case an epitext, can also contribute to territorial embedding. We also see, in these brief extracts from A.'s literary work, how it reflects her concern with how outsider representations criminalise and marginalise favelas and their residents, which was also clear in the framing content on her blog.

As I have shown in this section, the themes of A.'s first self-published book ranged from favelas and related issues to those without an explicit place-based connection. Similarly, A.'s promotion of her self-published book on the internet was effective in reaching both translocal audiences in other regions of Brazil and Latin America, and people living in her own

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[334] As far as I know, this never happened, but A. did later launch the edited collections resulting from the writing competition she organised at a cultural centre in Maré run by the same organisation. I was in the UK writing up my research and therefore unable to attend.

[335] Another of A.'s poems also includes a section on the tendency of the media to focus on the negative aspects of life in the favela, in this case poverty: '*Manchete da tv / Que a todo momento / Vem mostrar / O miserável daqui.*' ['TV headline / Which constantly / Comes to show / The miserable side of life here.']

[336] 'I saw all of this, sir, but I didn't cry. That was at midday. I only cried at night, when the news was on and the reporter said "Police operation kills a minor involved in the drugs trade in the favela..."
Oh, sir, the kid was a student... The boy was a student...'

[337] See Pereira Leite and Farias (2009) for a discussion of such protests.

neighbourhood and city. In this way, as well as producing internet and print content which is strongly territorially embedded, A. uses the internet to develop and exploit translocal connections and interests, and by extension to broaden the visibility of her work. Although specific aspects of her content creation practice can be highlighted and isolated in a discussion focused on local content, as is the case here, it is important to recognise that this is only one dimension of her practices, and that it is difficult to disentangle the local from the translocal, the geographically local from the thematically local in her activities. Nonetheless, many of these activities share a similar orientation, and reflect A.'s concern with the representation not only of her own favela, but also of favelas and urban periphery areas more broadly speaking. I will now look specifically at A.'s organisation and promotion of a short story competition for residents of Maré, which did not come to fruition in its original form but later re-emerged as two different writing competitions, one focusing on suburban poetry, and the other seeking short stories in Portuguese about the periphery, revealing how the local and the translocal are intertwined in A.'s work.

Following the twists and turns of a (trans)local writing competition

The impetus for the original writing competition, targeting Maré residents, resulted from the inclusion of a piece by A. in the crime collection which was mentioned earlier. Once selected, she told her contact at the publisher about the many other writers she knew of in her local area. She had been gaining some recognition of her own – not just this publication opportunity, but also a personal distinction from a chain of private schools, as well as encouraging comments on texts published on her blog – and this was accompanied by the desire to extend such recognition and the resulting opportunities to her peers.[338] She believed that there was a great deal of potential among her fellow residents:

> *Quando percebi, quando comecei a ver que as coisas estavam dando certo para mim, eu pensei poxa, eu tô aqui, não sou ninguém, vamos dizer assim, não sou ninguém, e tantos outros ninguéns aqui da minha comunidade, do meu espaço, do meu espaço comum, né, também não são ninguém, assim. Mas têm tanto talento quanto ou mais do que eu, então poxa, [...] porque não botar estas pessoas, assim, em evidência, porque estas pessoas não podem aparecer.* (Interview, 19 January 2010)[339]

[338] There are interesting parallels with Ferréz's motivation for showcasing the work of other writers like himself in the *Caros Amigos* supplements on marginal literature. Peçanha do Nascimento (2009: 44) reports that Ferréz saw his success and that of Paulo Lins (author of the book version of *City of God* which formed the basis for the film) as *'uma possibilidade de desmistificar as imagens de ambos como "exceções" surgidas de contextos sociais ligadas à violência e à pobreza'* ['a chance to demystify the image of both of them as "exceptions" originating from social contexts associated with violence and poverty'].

[339] 'When I realised, when I started to see that things were working out for me, I thought, gosh, I'm here, I'm a nobody, let's put it like that, I'm a nobody, and there are so many other nobodies here in my community, in my

In fact, she had already set up an Orkut community for local writers,[340] to discuss and share ideas, and had been asked to read and comment on other people's work. After mentioning the existence of such writers to her contact at the publisher, he asked her to email him more details, and the response came back asking her to take on the organisation of the competition and resulting anthology herself. Despite feeling she did not have enough editing experience, she agreed to take on the role.

A. initially publicised the competition via the internet, posting a message with details of the competition in the forum of an Orkut community oriented to Maré and in the Orkut community she had herself set up for local writers – combining a chatty, informal style in the initial message and more formal language when outlining the regulations for the competition. The opening message summarised the expectations of the editors, and invited reflections on both positive and negative aspects of life in *espaços populares*:

> *Que se espera de um 'conto de periferia'?*
> *Que se retrate, num conto, o cotidiano dos espaços populares. Sua beleza e a sua desigualdade, sua gente, seus medos, enfim... Tudo isso num maravilhoso mix em forma de conto.*[341]

Only residents of the Maré neighbourhood were eligible to submit material, and would need to supply proof of address if selected. This announcement therefore made space for a diversity of representations of the periphery. It targeted people living in a particular geographic location, but did not require them to write specifically about that location, although it certainly encouraged them to write about place.

A. decided to supplement the initial online dissemination of the competition, which she considered insufficient, with face-to-face publicity. She went to two local NGOs and explained that she was in charge of editing an anthology of stories by local writers and that she wanted not only to provide opportunities for writers she already knew of in the local area, but also to discover new talents. She also undertook some ad hoc dissemination of the competition, for example she posted a comment on the blog post discussed in chapter 4, inviting the author to enter. Overall, she described the dissemination of the competition as '*tudo muito precário*'

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area, you know, they're also nobodies, right. But they are just as talented as me, if not more so, so why not, you know, shine a light on them, why can't these people also be noticed.'

340 This was the entry point for this case study. I originally contacted A. due to her role as the administrator of this Orkut community, although I was also aware that she maintained a blog.

341 'What do we expect from a short story about the periphery?
It should portray, in short story format, everyday life in *espaços populares*. Their beauty and their inequality, their people, their fears, that kind of thing... All of this mixed together wonderfully in a short story.'

(interview, 19 January 2010),[342] but also pronounced herself pleased with the results, and considered that it was an achievement to have received almost 30 texts from people living in an area which still faces many challenges in the area of literacy and education.

One of the NGOs she visited, to which she already had a connection, decided to support the competition by organising and publicising a workshop to help people in the development of their texts. A friend of A.'s helped out by developing an online banner advertising the event (published on the NGO's website) as well as pamphlets which he distributed in the street. A. reposted the banner ad at the bottom of her writing blog and on her events and competitions blog, where she also included the updated competition regulations with a new closing date. This banner ad included the description supplied in A.'s initial post on the Orkut community about the characteristics of potential submissions, but replaced the final sentence (*'Tudo isso num maravilhoso mix em forma de conto')* as follows: *'Tudo. Numa visão de dentro para fora, ou seja, do morador-escritor-artista para o leitor.'*[343] This therefore appeared to place greater emphasis on the fact that the target readership might be non-residents of the favela. The institutional support for the competition and the workshop was also given greater emphasis in the banner ad, displayed visually via the use of logos, than in the purely textual presentation of the competition in the initial message by A. in the Orkut community, written using her personal account. A. was not able to attend the workshop in person because of work commitments but reported hearing that it was a success. She told me that it was attended by around 20 people and produced 12 texts for the competition.

Despite all of these efforts, the competition ran into problems and did not go ahead as planned. A. wrote to participants about this and proposed taking forward the project on an independent and cooperative basis. A small group of local residents remained interested in the idea. At the same time, other friends, who had not been eligible to participate in the original competition, continued to ask her what had become of it. The idea began to gain momentum again via the interest of this mixed (and fundamentally translocal) group of people, this time without being restricted to a particular location, but rather coalescing around the idea of the periphery, which had after all been the theme from the outset. A. pronounced herself excited about this development, and noted the widened, translocal scope of the

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[342] 'all very precarious'

[343] 'Everything. From an insider perspective, in an outwards movement, in other words, from the resident-writer-artist for the reader.'

competition, as well as the internal diversity of the neighbourhood which had constituted its original focus:

> *Mas estou muito empolgada porque é uma coisa que eu pensei que ia ser local, pequena, né, e então, minúscula mesmo, né, porque só as pessoas daqui. Se bem que a Maré parece enorme né, mas enfim, uma coisa local, ela começou a tomar outras dimensões.* (interview, 19 January 2010)[344]

A. also described how organising the competition around the theme of the periphery served to unite diverse experiences and perspectives:

> *[Name of contributor], ele é de São Paulo, então, assim, já é outra cidade, né, outra realidade, apesar de ser urbano também, mas assim, é uma outra realidade. São Paulo é muito diferente do Rio, então é, é, vai ser bem legal esta experiência, esse olhar dele dentro do livro. O olhar da [name of another contributor], que é assim, a periferia dela é diferente da minha. [...] Porque eu estou dentro de uma comunidade, de uma favela, de fato. Ela não, ela está dentro de um espaço... popular, mas é numa, é numa zona rural, entende. Então, assim, o olhar dela também é diferente. E é periférico ao mesmo tempo. Então, assim, é muito, vai ser muito enriquecedor, assim, ter todas essas visões, todos esses olhares.* (interview, 19 January 2010)[345]

There are echoes of Hermano Vianna's *Central da Periferia* manifesto here, which made reference to 'the direct voice of the periphery speaking loudly in all corners of the country' (2006: 1). A. mentions people living in different cities as well as a periurban area, and emphasises the differences between them, but also what they have in common. The translocal nature of the writing competition also brings to mind Barbosa Pereira's account of how graffiti taggers from different neighbourhoods (or '*quebradas*', as they are known there) of São Paulo unite around the shared identity of the periphery when they meet to tag in the centre of the city. As he observes, in this setting, 'periphery becomes not only a spatial category, but also an identity category which makes reference to class, but which is not restricted to this factor' (Barbosa Pereira 2010: 158).[346] As the different writers come together in the shared literary space of the writing competition created by A., they (and she) affirm their diversity and that of the places they hail from, but also their shared identity as subjects from the periphery, engaged in cultural production which seeks to represent it. Like the taggers from different *quebradas* who meet and leave their marks on city centre walls, these

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[344] 'But I'm really excited because I thought it would be something local, small, right, rather minuscule, yeah, just people from here. Although Maré seems enormous, doesn't it, but anyway, a local thing, it has started to take on other dimensions'.

[345] '[Name of contributor], he's from São Paulo, so, that's another city already, right, another reality, even though it's also urban, but you know, it's another reality. São Paulo is very different to Rio, so, it's going to be really cool to have this experience, his perspective in the book. [Name of contributor]'s perspective, you know, her periphery is very different from mine. Because I am in a community, in an actual favela. She's not, she's in an... *espaço popular*, but it's in a rural area, you understand. So her perspective is also different. But it's from the periphery at the same time. So I think it's going to be really enriching to bring together all these different visions, all these different perspectives.'

[346] *'periferia passa não apenas a ser uma categoria espacial, como também uma categoria identitária que faz referência à pertença de classe, mas que não se restringe a esse fator'*

writers 'are in a constant process of reterritorialising the periphery' (Barbosa Pereira 2010: 161),[347] affirming the connections that exist between them, and showing that they too are part of the city.

On the back cover of her solo book, A. had explicitly categorised her work as representing a style of writing from the periphery, stating that '*a autora tenta retratar o olho dos marginalizados de uma maneira poética e reflexiva; evidenciando o poetar-pensante, característico dos poetas da periferia*'.[348] However, discussing the texts received for the original competition with me, she argued against the idea of a shared style which characterised writing from the periphery (although she did recognise that factors such as attendance at university or preparatory courses might contribute to the emergence of some common features),[349] at the same time as she drew attention to the diversity of the texts submitted. It is worth pointing out that as well as her interest in supporting and encouraging writers from her own community, A. has connections to other suburban authors and suburban writing movements in Rio, and linked to some relevant blogs from her blogroll. In 2009 she participated in an event in a public square in a northern suburb of Rio, at which books were suspended from trees and poems by relatively unknown writers, including some from the local area, were distributed around the square. She also had a long-standing plan to edit a collection of suburban poetry.

This plan came to fruition thanks to the relaunched version of the writing competition which ran from April to August 2010, independently hosted by A.'s poetry and competitions blog and comprising two parallel competitions which would result in print anthologies. One announcement invited submissions from people living in the municipality of Rio de Janeiro for an anthology of suburban poetry. The other called for short stories on the theme of the periphery from anyone over the age of 16 writing in Portuguese. The competitions were again publicised via emails, Orkut, publication of the regulations on A.'s competitions blog, a press release, and a YouTube video. This two-minute video remixed photographs and artwork from the internet (sourced via an NGO website and Google, according to the credits),

[347] '*estão em um processo constante de reterritorialização da periferia*'

[348] 'the author seeks to portray the gaze of the marginalised in a poetic and reflexive way, showing a thoughtful approach to poetry-writing, characteristic of poets from the periphery'.

[349] Peçanha do Nascimento (2009: 47-48) identified some common features of the work of the São Paulo authors she studied, such as colloquial language, use of visual resources (drawings, photos, graffiti), slang associated with hip hop/periphery settings, swear words and written constructions that differ from the educated norm. Common themes of their texts were the daily life of the working classes, urban violence, lack of cultural goods and resources, labour relations and precarious urban infrastructure. The main forms were poems and short stories, often with a descriptive, documentary or biographical focus.

music available on the internet, and text about the competition, in a further example of bricolage in digital culture (Deuze 2006). The general themes of the images were popular music and culture, street art, leisure activities in the favela, artistic representations of urban space, and the police, and they can be understood as an illustration of both positive and challenging aspects of life in the favela mentioned in the original call for submissions to the competition. The updated press release for this phase of the competition gave its aims as follows: to encourage the production of literary texts, to encourage reading, promote and pay tribute to authors, but above all, to give voice to 'marginal authors', writers and poets who portray everyday life in *espaços populares.*

Whilst it was not possible to closely follow this writing competition through to completion during the present research project,[350] or to engage with other participants in the event, it is included here alongside the analysis of the embeddedness of A.'s internet and print content to show how her interest in the production of local representations of a particular favela or periphery/marginal spaces more generally also translates into efforts to provide opportunities and create the conditions for others like her to be able to do this. The development and evolution of the writing competition also reveals different modes of embeddedness and the fluidity of the locality constructed within the scope of a single content event, which went from having a focus on a particular favela or neighbourhood, to Rio's suburbs more broadly and the periphery as a potentially translocal or even global theme. The shifting scale of the locality produced through the writing competition and how this was a response to events also brings to mind Gordon and Koo's concept of the 'placeworld', which will be central to my analysis in the following chapter. Finally, although the competition in its different incarnations was publicised using the internet, its goal of print publication for the selected authors and its dissemination via face-to-face channels evidences a communicative ecology that spans a range of contexts, as was also true of the case study presented in chapter 4.

Conclusion

This chapter has shown that it is not only what is commonly thought of as content, but also its framing and embedding via paratextual content which can produce locality on the internet.

[350] I did manage to attend part of the launch event for the two anthologies that resulted from the relaunched competition, and have followed some of the subsequent developments via the internet. As noted earlier, the anthologies have also now been launched in Maré itself. There has been some coverage of the publications in the print media and on the internet. Since then, A. has organised a second edition of the competition and the resulting anthology was launched in August 2011. She has also set up a separate webpage for this project.

This emphasis on the origins of internet content fits well with Ballantyne's (2002: 5) definition of local content as content which *comes from* local groups or individuals. In the first part of this chapter, I focused on the content 'around' A.'s literary content, in other words, on the content that is used to frame and contextualise the publication and dissemination of these literary texts and which makes explicit whence they come. I approached content in its multimodal sense, with close attention not only to different types of content (image, text, video) but also to how A. used bricolage in the sidebar of her blog to combine textual and visual content in the production of a form of locality which combined different geographical scales and positioned the favela within the city. Overall, this chapter has shown that A. makes a significant investment in affirming and evidencing the embeddedness of her content (and herself) in a specific geographic place, as part of an attempt to present reframed representations of favelas and the periphery.

This reframing effort was also evident in A.'s print work. She built on the selection of one of her short stories for inclusion in a print volume by a Rio publisher, and her own experience of print self-publication, to develop a writing competition which aimed to support and promote the work of others like her. This competition served as another means to frame and embed her own work and that of other writers from favelas, suburbs and the urban periphery, linking them in a collective affirmation of the urban periphery and of an identity which is both spatial and not directly linked to place. Locality, in this chapter, has thus proved to be a multiple, fluid and mobile concept, encompassing variously a particular favela or neighbourhood, the city as a whole, suburbs and translocal periphery settings, and was also associated with thematic areas of interest, again consistent with Ballantyne's understanding of local content. The final case study in this thesis will consider a similarly diverse and inclusive ecology of locality produced in the work of a different content creator from Maré.

Chapter 6: Local embeddedness and placeworlds: From the favela to the city to the Brazilian north-east

Introduction

This chapter discusses the flows of content on and around a blog which was set up in 2007 by a resident of Maré, who migrated in his teens from a small village in the north-east of Brazil. The chapter focuses its discussion more generally on the nature of blogging as a medium for representing favelas, rather than providing close analysis of a single blog post as in chapter 4. However, the chapter also considers specific examples of content produced by this blogger, whom I will call V. Although V.'s blog is also a personal blog which provides some information about its author and his activities, it has from the outset been explicitly oriented and constructed around place. However, as I show in this chapter, his is an inclusive, networked approach to place, and as well as his personal blog, he has also set up an Orkut community and linked blog for his home village in the Brazilian north-east and is in regular contact with people there via the internet. He thus engages intensely with both his current place of residence and his birthplace through his content creation activities on the internet, although this takes place in different ways, for different audiences, and with different degrees of visibility. In other words, the focus of V.'s local content creation is translocal, by which I mean that it reflects the need and desire to identify with more than one place, identified by Sun (2010: 299) and discussed in chapter 1.

Given this study focuses specifically on the representation of favelas by their residents in local content, it is this area of V.'s activities which constitutes the main focus of the chapter. I show how V.'s content represents and engages with the favela as both local (specific, particular) and translocal (collective, plural, diverse) place and how he situates and affirms it as part of the city. However, my interest in locality and embeddedness also justifies some attention to the content about his birthplace, and how connections between places, or connections to different places, are reflected in his content practices as well as in the content itself. As in chapter 5, this approach reflects an effort to situate local content creation activities, and particularly those relating explicitly to the favela, in the broader context of a particular practitioner's activities. Overall, I argue that the local content produced by V. is an expression of his embeddedness in multiple places, as well as his mobility between them. Gordon and Koo's concept of the 'placeworld', introduced in chapter 1, thus perfectly expresses the theme of this chapter, namely that the particular context of the locality of V.'s

blog is constructed through the intersection of his interests and intentions, which shift and evolve, as well as reflecting his embeddedness in multiple contexts. In other words, the 'local' in local content sometimes relates to events or people in immediate geographical proximity, and at other times stretches much further and involves geographically dispersed locations and people. As an expression of an individual content creator's ecology of locality, local content is able to foreground the connections and flows which exist between different scales or contexts of locality (whether place-based or otherwise) and different places which that individual engages with in their everyday practices.

V.'s content also reveals a concern with memory and local history. While Gomes da Cunha (2007: n.p.) has drawn attention to the striking number of projects begun in Rio de Janeiro since the turn of the century which focus on the 'production and recuperation of the memory and history of favelas',[351] my analysis here considers how a resident of a favela has used the internet largely outside of the scope of such projects to present, curate and store content about the history of his neighbourhood, at the same time as he develops original material that documents the area's contemporary reality and events taking place there, and might therefore become a historical source in the future.

The chapter begins with a brief overview of V.'s blog, describing it as a site for the publication of multimedia local content, around which a distributed communicative circuit has been established. I then look more closely at the specifically territorial embeddedness of V.'s blog, and consider how its focus has evolved over time from its origins as site for the publication of photographs of everyday life in Maré to one providing broader, multimedia coverage of everyday life in the city of Rio with a particular interest in favelas, whilst still remaining distinctly oriented to Maré. I also show how V. uses his blog to put forward his own understanding of his neighbourhood and his city. My focus then shifts to a detailed examination of two content events which show how V. engages with place and locality, namely a series of photographs taken in different parts of Rio with a mobile phone camera and a cluster of posts which engage in and report on place-based activism against the building of walls around favelas. I also consider examples of how V. occasionally weaves content about the Brazilian north-east into his blog's ecology of locality. After this, I return to the theme of content creation about favelas, and discuss how V. negotiates the translocal visibility of local content on the internet, before examining how he tackles the

[351] One example of this trend, mentioned by Gomes da Cunha, is the *Favela tem memória* website, developed by *Viva Favela*.

representational complexities associated with favelas and the challenge of locating his work between negative and positive extremes whilst also covering the practices of everyday life. In the final section of the chapter, I discuss V.'s curation of a series of historical videos of Maré which he sourced, reformatted, uploaded to YouTube and published on his blog.

The data for this chapter was collected through informal conversations and interactions, one longer in-depth interview with V. which was recorded and transcribed, and analysis of blog content and other relevant material published or circulated via the internet. Content posted on Orkut by V. was not observed or collected, nor, largely, was the content published on the blog relating to his place of birth, but these aspects of V.'s content creation are included as they arose in conversations with him.[352] As in case studies presented in chapters 4 and 5, this chapter maps, describes and analyses multiple flows of local content, and it now begins with an introduction to V.'s blog, its origins and evolution.

Overview of V.'s blog

V. is a photographer and university student, and first set up his blog with the aim of using it to post photographs, since at the time the social network site Orkut did not offer all the necessary functionality, or limited the number of photographs which could be posted on the platform. However, from the outset, the blog also carried other types of content, as V. explained:

> *Assim, [...] quando eu criei o blog eu pensava inicialmente em imagens, né, para o blog, só que assim, eu também escrevia então, [...] acabou ficando com esse caráter de foto, texto, notícia, poesia, crônica, artigo, então tem essa misturada* (interview, 8 February 2010).[353] [354]

Nonetheless, photographs (mainly taken by V. himself, although he also sometimes posts those taken by friends and colleagues) continue to be a key aspect of the blog, which is highly visual. They are used in the custom blog header, in the sidebar of the blog, and with frequency in blog posts themselves. Indeed, posts on this blog are often made up only of one or more photographs, accompanied by very brief textual captions. These include a series of photographs taken with a mobile phone camera, which are discussed in a later section of this

[352] As I noted, in chapter 2, I knew V. and his blog before beginning this research, and had participated in a blog workshop in Rio which he helped to run in 2007.

[353] 'So, [...] when I set up the blog I was initially thinking of images, you know, for the blog, except that, you know, I also wrote so, [...] it ended up being this combination of photos, texts, news, poetry, chronicles, articles, so there is that mixture'.

[354] Edmundo Páz Soldán (2007: 260) notes that the chronicle has long been an important literary genre in Latin America and suggests that it may be being revitalised on the internet: 'perhaps the true contemporary form of the chronicle is being written on the Internet by authors of blogs'.

chapter.[355] As Cohen (2005: 886) notes, the distinction between blogs and photoblogs is not clear, but in general terms, 'blogs use short bits of writing to chronicle daily events while photoblogs tend to use photographs in association with text to tell their tales'. Photographs are a key component of V.'s blog, and are indeed used to 'tell tales', but his own comments cited above show that the blog cannot be reduced to this dimension. Overall, V.'s blog, which also includes videos (to be discussed in a later section of this chapter), takes advantage of the full range of multimedia possibilities afforded by the blog format.

As with the blog described in the previous chapter, V.'s blog underwent design alterations and changes during the period of the research and can thus be considered a 'fluid text' in itself. A descriptive text published on the blog acknowledges this mutability, noting that it '*inevitavelmente transforma-se com a mesma rotina e intensidade que o próprio cotidiano*' (screenshot 9 June 2010).[356] There are echoes here of comments made by one of the London bloggers studied by Reed, who drew a parallel between the openendedness of blogs and life in the city, describing herself as 'being a "work in progress", someone who (like the city) is constantly evolving or "updating" in response to changing circumstances and the stimuli she daily receives' (2008: 401). While minor adjustments to V.'s blog were made fairly regularly, there have also been clearly defined upgrades or redesigns of the blog. For example, at the end of 2009, after purchasing a custom domain for the blog (which had previously been hosted on Google's free Blogger service), V. undertook major work on the blog and for a time its homepage showed a message indicating that the blog was undergoing changes, apologising for the inconvenience and assuring visitors that things would be back to normal shortly. In its revised form, the blog uses a template which gives a site or homepage-like appearance, as V. himself observed: '*isso cada vez mais dá uma cara de uma página né, uma página mais sofisticada*' (interview, 8 February 2010).[357] He also told me that the new template he had selected placed a renewed emphasis on images. A number of tabs above the blog header image link to pages with information about the blog and the blogger, and specific topics. These have varied, but have included, for example, pages aggregating different types of content (such as video, photographs, or articles), pages about the photographic exhibitions in which the blogger has participated, information about his

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[355] As I noted in chapter 3, there are now more mobile phones than people in Brazil, and media reports point to the increasing demand for mobile phones with multimedia capabilities among the country's emerging middle classes (for example, G1 2010a, Folha.com 2010a, Nicacio 2010, Ribeiro 2010; Roncolato 2010). According to CETIC.br (2010d), 35% of those in B class, 24% in C class and 12% of those in classes D and E reported using a mobile phone to send and/or receive photographs and images.

[356] 'inevitably transforms itself with the same routine and intensity as everyday life itself'

[357] 'that increasingly makes it look like a webpage, doesn't it, a more sophisticated webpage'

university studies, and so on. The blog has also used other ways of linking, highlighting and aggregating specific areas of content via hyperlinks underneath the header image, and clickable images in the sidebar.

The description provided above and V.'s own comments imply that his blog can also be considered a variant on, or further development of, a personal homepage or personal website, which incorporates blogging functionality. On the one hand, Herring et al have noted the overlap between blogs and personal homepages, with both being 'typically created and maintained by a single individual', and their content tending 'to focus on the creator or his/her interests' (2004: 2), although they conclude overall that blogs are 'a hybrid of existing genres, rendered unique by the particular features of the source genres they adapt, and by their particular technological affordances' (2004: 10). On the other hand, Viégas (2005: n.p.) points out that blogs differ fundamentally from homepages and other web publishing venues due to their emphasis on adding to and archiving, rather than substituting, content. This archival functionality of blogs is also discussed by Carrington (2009: 10), who observes that it 'adds a sense of personal trajectory through time and space' and enables bloggers to 'construct a historical self-archive that is both private and public'. As I noted in chapter 4 when discussing the authorship of the *Terra Boa* blog post, the relationship of blog readers to the accumulative nature of blog content is addressed by Himmer (2004: n.p.), who describes how blog readers use the clues provided to them over time by a blog author to develop a picture of 'who is speaking to them, and why, and from where'. Carrington and Himmer thus converge in identifying the situatedness of blog archives, which is very much relevant to a discussion of blogs and other social media as a platform for publishing and/or archiving local content, whether in relation to a particular place, interest group or, as proposed in the introduction to this chapter, an individual and his or her ecology of locality. In this way, the situatedness of blogs and their archived content can be understood as an expression of the embeddedness of their creators in multiple contexts. Or, to borrow an argument from Bosco, these situated archives can be said to reveal embeddedness as a 'geographically flexible process that embraces a relational understanding of place' (2006: 343).

As well as blog archives themselves, bloggers often make use of other internet platforms to store and archive content which they also publish or link on their blogs,[358] or to disseminate

[358] Based on their experiences with the edgeX project in Australia, Humphreys and Bruns (2010: 55-56) highlight the advantages of web 2.0 platforms (e.g. photograph and video sharing sites, blogs and collaborative mapping sites) over technically demanding purpose-built local content websites. They point out that web 2.0 platforms can

blog content to different audiences. For example, V.'s blog publishes or displays content which is also stored on a Picasa photograph album,[359] a YouTube video channel, and more recently, a Twitter account.[360] He also has an Orkut account and uses this to publicise blog posts to friends. Although he was initially reluctant to join the platform, assuming it would live up to negative stereotypes about its superficiality,[361] he now sees it as a powerful communication tool. For example, he described his interest in a recently released (at the time when I interviewed him) Orkut function called 'Promova' which allowed users to send an alert to all their friends at once (recipients can also then forward on these alerts, in functionality that brings to mind the 'retweet' feature of Twitter). He has also previously been involved in organising and publicising events in the favela where he lives, which adopted Orkut communities and blogs as their core communication strategy. Aside from Orkut, he disseminates his own blog content using other channels, including Twitter and an email list which he has subdivided into different categories of people with different interests (for example, those more likely to be interested in articles, those interested in photographs, those interested in more '*corriqueiro*' (trivial, or everyday, content), but he only sends out email alerts when he feels the content is particularly important or relevant.

Despite these dissemination strategies via a blog-circuit, V.'s blog does not receive many public comments. Many of his posts receive no comments at all, and others just a handful.[362] In an end-of-year summary of his blog posted in December 2009, which I discuss in more detail below, V. identified the most read and commented post of the year (which attracted eight comments including one of his own). However, V. also described to me how people respond in a dispersed way to the blog content by means of the different channels he employs in its dissemination. For example, when he sends a message to members of one of his distribution lists, he may receive feedback and comments by email. When he posts a photograph, he may receive comments by Orkut, or on email, but rarely on the blog itself. He feels that posts of a primarily textual nature are those that tend to be read more and stimulate

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be used for storing content, and serve as a source for localised mash-ups which bring together content from different sources in new ways. Finally, they suggest that availability of user-generated content on such platforms, as well as on sites developed by projects or individuals, potentially increases its visibility.

[359] Picasa is Google's software for organising and sharing photographs.

[360] As well as commenting on the use of Twitter by mainstream bloggers and media organisations in Brazil to disseminate their content, V. noted that social movements had also adopted the platform and that it enabled them to circulate and access information quickly (interview, 8 February 2010).

[361] The influence of these stereotypes was touched on in chapter 3, which mentioned that some digital inclusion projects have banned the use of Orkut because it is considered entertainment and therefore not a productive use of the internet.

[362] This is not unusual. For example, Herring et al (2004: 8) found that the average number of comments for posts in their research sample of blogs was 0.3 and that many posts received no comments at all. In the sample used by Nardi et al (2004: 228), blog comments were infrequent and often without substance.

more reaction on the blog itself. The decentralised nature of these responses to content[363] shows how V.'s blog is connected into a wider communicative ecology, as set out in chapter 2, and that this involves different channels, potentially different audiences, and therefore different degrees of external or non-local visibility. This ecology extends beyond the internet to face-to-face interactions – V. described how friends would ask him about the blog if he went for a while without publishing anything: *'A própria galera mesmo, [fala] "e aí?", você fica um tempo sem publicar nada, [eles falam] "e aí, não publicou mais nada não?" e tal'* (interview, 8 February 2010).[364] As the following section reveals, this communicative circuit and the content around which it circulates also have potentially different degrees of locality.

Local embeddedness: From the favela to the city

The first ever post on V.'s blog was about culture in Maré, as he later recalled when marking the blog's three-year anniversary (screenshot, 12 April 2010), showing that from the outset the blog's content was strongly embedded in a particular local setting. A descriptive text available on one of the blog's static pages[365] explained that while the blog's current focus was everyday life in the city of Rio de Janeiro, its '*lugar real*', or 'real place', was the Maré group of favelas.[366] In this way, V. seeks to explicitly 'anchor' and situate the content on his blog in a specific physical location. His affirmation of the blog's territorial embeddedness is accompanied by some factual background about Maré, presented in a simple and straightforward manner that suggests it is directed at least in part at readers who might not be aware of such basic facts about the neighbourhood and its geographical location:

> *A Maré é formada por 16 comunidades com um total de 140 mil habitantes distribuídos em quase 5 quilômetros quadrados. O bairro Maré é emoldurado pela Avenida Brasil, Linha Vermelha e Linha Amarela, principais vias da cidade do Rio de Janeiro.* (screenshot 9 June 2010)[367]

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[363] In an early study of blogging by 'ordinary people', Schiano et al (2004: 1144) found a similar pattern of infrequent commenting by regular readers combined with feedback provided in other ways such as readers' blogs, face-to-face contact and other media.

[364] 'The gang themselves [will say], "so?", some time passes without you publishing anything, [they'll say] "so, haven't you published anything else since then?", that kind of thing'

[365] I am citing from the version of this page which was available on the blog in June 2010. As I observed in chapters 4 and 5, blog content, even on static pages (which can themselves be added, removed or altered at a moment's notice), should always be considered dynamic and subject to change.

[366] As already noted, the blog was originally created in response to the desire to have somewhere to post photographs – and this text also makes it clear that those photographs were specifically of everyday life in the Maré favela.

[367] 'Maré is made up of 16 communities with a total of 140 thousand inhabitants spread over almost 5 square kilometres. The neighbourhood of Maré is framed by Avenida Brasil, the Linha Vermelha and the Linha Amarela, which are major roads in the city of Rio de Janeiro.'

However, this can also be understood as a more neutral description of Maré, without recourse to the more sensationalist labels and mention of crime and violence which are common in descriptions of the area by the mainstream media, or by mainstream cultural producers in general, as the synopsis of the film *Maré, nossa história de amor* provided at the end of chapter 3 revealed.

Despite the way this descriptive text on V.'s blog explicitly localises and territorially embeds its content, it also includes the observation that with the passing of time, the focus of the blog has expanded to include general questions relating to the city of Rio de Janeiro as a whole, and in particular questions relating directly or indirectly to favelas:

> *com o tempo o espaço se ampliou, passou a comportar assuntos mais gerais e de interesses não só da Maré. Atualmente aborda assuntos da cidade do Rio como um todo, em especial questões envolvendo as favelas, diretamente ou indiretamente.* (screenshot 9 June 2010)[368]

This text, which shows the self-consciously translocal orientation of the blog, goes on to put forward a definition of favelas, or what is better described as a statement of how favelas are understood by/on the blog:

> *A favela é aqui entendida como:*
>
> *1. espaço transpassado pela existência do belo, do feio, do triste, da alegria, do curioso, do bom, do injusto, do violento e do violentado.*
> *2. espaço fruto de gritantes contradições históricas não resolvidas.*
> *3. parte integrante e essencial da cidade.* (screenshot 9 June 2010)[369]

This page, therefore, foregrounds how V. uses the blog to put forward his own interpretation and understanding of his neighbourhood, and favelas more broadly. It also asserts favelas as part of the city, recalling content with a similar message discussed in chapter 5. While place remains central to the focus of the blog, the local here is no longer restricted to locality in the conventional sense of a single, bounded, geographical location but rather reflects a shifting and evolving 'placeworld'. Nonetheless, V. emphasises his place of residence (a territorial, and social, context), as the place from which he creates content. The linking of a neighbourhood (Maré), a city (Rio) and a particular type of neighbourhood, or a particular social, cultural, economic and spatial context (favelas), can be understood as an example of

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[368] 'with time the focus of the space expanded, and began to include more general subjects and those not only of relevance to Maré. It currently covers matters relating to the city of Rio as a whole, and especially issues involving favelas, directly or indirectly.'

[369] 'The favela is understood here as:
1. a space criss-crossed by the beautiful, the ugly, the happy, the curious, the good, the unjust, the violent and the violated.
2. a space which is the consequence of striking unresolved historical contradictions.
3. an integral and essential part of the city.'

Bosco's relational understanding of place, mentioned in chapters 1 and 4 of this thesis. Like the Madres de Plaza de Mayo studied by Bosco, the place-based focus of V.'s blog 'expanded geographically' (2006: 343) over time, and Bosco's description of a visibility dependent on 'embedded affective ties that operate across space' (2006: 359) offers a way of conceptualising the connections between different spaces of the city which are expressed in V.'s content.

There is thus an 'outwards' movement in the scope of V.'s blog, which expanded from an original emphasis on visual material representing a particular neighbourhood, to the current focus on multimedia content about a particular type of neighbourhoods (favelas), and life in the city in general, or as the blog's own descriptive text put it, '*diversos assuntos da vida cotidiana da cidade do Rio de Janeiro'* (screenshot 9 June 2010).[370] However, a clear local focus on a particular neighbourhood nonetheless remains. As V. told me, he was keen to broaden the scope of the content on his blog, to go '*além do próprio espaço da Maré'*,[371] but he also recognised that sometimes the content on the blog continued to be '*restrito, né, [...] mais local*'[372] to Maré (interview, 8 February 2010).

Indeed, he noted that it was not only the blog's content which had a largely local place-based focus, but also its audience, telling me that '*a maior parte dos leitores são locais'* (interview, 8 February 2010).[373] He suggested that one reason for this was that his Orkut contacts were mainly from the favela where he lives, but noted that the blog's dissemination networks also included people from the north-east of Brazil, reflecting his roots there, some of whom were alerted to blog posts via Twitter. This translocal readership for 'local' content can be considered a reflection of multiple forms of embeddedness and the way that digital technologies both enable remote access to localised content and disturb the idea of locality as only place-based, although it is beyond the scope of this thesis to consider how these different readers engage with the content on V's blog. However, it is important to note V.'s affirmation of the blog's ongoing embeddedness in a particular local territory, as well as in particular social networks. His comments again bring to mind Hess's formulation of the three types of embeddedness (territorial, social and network) when he says: '*todo mundo sabe da*

[370] 'various aspects of the everyday life of the city of Rio de Janeiro'
[371] 'beyond the space of Maré itself'
[372] 'restricted, you know, [...] more local'
[373] 'most of the readers are local'. Viégas (2005: n.p.) has looked at how bloggers form an idea of who their audience is and suggests that the 'paucity of clues indicating identity and presence can cause distorted views of readership to emerge. For one thing, bloggers may begin to perceive the people whose presence is more tangibly obvious (e.g., commenters) as their entire audience'.

existência do blog, assim, os meus amigos todos, então quando mando tem muita essa coisa do local, né' (interview, 8 February 2010).[374] The word '*local*' in this passage refers primarily to territorial embeddedness but also implies social and network embeddedness.

The chapter now examines three different ways in which V. engages with place and locality in the content published on his blog. It first looks briefly at mobile phone photographs of different locations in Rio de Janeiro taken by V. and organised in a series on his blog, before examining in more depth a cluster of posts about the walling of favelas in the city (and later in Maré). Finally, it considers a small amount of content about V.'s birthplace in the north-east of Brazil posted on his Rio-focused blog, after a trip home.

Photographic documentation and mapping of places/spaces in Rio

V. has experimented with using his mobile phone to take photographs of urban places and spaces, which form the subject of a thematic series posted on his blog. Indeed, he told me that the fact of having a blog had encouraged this production: '*cada vez mais eu tenho produzido com o próprio celular, né, e aí muito por conta do blog, né*' (interview, 8 February 2010).[375] After purchasing a sophisticated camera phone, he began to use it to take photographs and, liking the results, he embarked on what he called '*uma documentação fotográfica dos lugares em que ando produzida com a câmera de um celular*' (screenshot, 28 January 2010).[376] As Okabe and Ito (2003: n.p.) observe, 'the camera phone makes it possible to take and share pictures of the stream of people, places, [...] and objects in the flow of everyday life'. In V.'s case, the focus is primarily on urban places and spaces, or the shapes, sometimes unexpected, that can be discovered in them. In this way, V. does indeed use his mobile phone to 'capture the more fleeting and unexpected moments of surprise, beauty and adoration in the everyday', which Okabe and Ito (2003: n.p.) note 'is now the site of potential [...] visual archiving'. For example, one photograph included in a blog post which explained the motivations behind this thematic series of photographs (screenshot, 28 January 2010), was taken from the window of a bus in which V. was travelling and captures different elements of a road accident which had just taken place: the car which had been hit by the bus in question, the driver of the car, and the police car arriving to deal with the

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[374] 'everyone knows about the blog, you know, all my friends, so when I send something there is a big focus on the local aspect, you know'

[375] 'more and more I've produced content using my phone itself, and that has a lot to do with the blog, you know'

[376] 'a photographic documentation of the places I frequent produced with a mobile phone camera'

aftermath. V.'s comment under the photograph notes that he was lucky to capture the different elements of the action in one shot. The people in this photograph are anonymous; that is, they are shot from behind or obscured by shadow, and we do not see their faces. This photograph was taken as V. literally moved around the city, and as the emphasis on mobility and movement in his description of the thematic series suggests, the locations of the pictures vary. In the selection on the blog post I am discussing here, they included a beach in southern Rio, the university where V. studies, and shots taken in or around the favela where he lives. The two other photographs in the selection which feature human figures show them silhouetted, through backlighting, at beauty spots in southern Rio de Janeiro, thereby making it almost impossible to look for visual clues about their identity or origins and perhaps precluding any attempt to use place of residence as a means of social classification, following the stigmatising trend discussed in chapter 3.

Three photographs in the selection on the blog post being discussed were taken in or near Maré and show how photography can be used to unsettle conventional visual representations of favelas. The first is a striking, abstract image with a black background, showing a starlike formation of white and red lights, each in the shape of an open, backwards C, just above the centre of the frame. However, the caption provided by V. explains that these are the lights of a moving ferris wheel at a funfair held in a subarea of Maré. In this case, V.'s use of a mobile phone camera allowed him to capture and display an intriguing and unusual visual effect, which results in an abstract and beautiful image of the kind not normally disseminated of a favela setting in mainstream representations. A further image of Maré, taken in a different subarea, again uses light and dark to striking effect. The photograph is taken in a tilt shot, and shows the silhouette of the top of what are probably two different houses, one with a large satellite dish on its roof. The dark, geometric forms of the buildings at the bottom of the frame contrast with the blue sky, a few streaky white clouds which appear in the top half of the frame, and the diffuse beams of the sun in the top right-hand corner. Again, the focus on light and dark obscures the detail of the architecture and employs a more reduced colour scheme in representing a favela scene than that seen for example in the images discussed in chapters 4 and 5, as well as presenting isolated rather than amassed buildings, thereby going against another common trend in photographs of favelas. A final image of the area around Maré in this selection shows one of the pedestrian walkways which cross the Avenida Brasil expressway. This time the photograph was taken on a cloudy day, giving a colour palette dominated by greys, but like the photograph of the silhouetted buildings discussed above, the sky takes up more than half of the frame. We see

an anonymous man completing his traverse of the walkway, and below it, we see only the tops of the cars and buses passing underneath.

This photographic series, which is ongoing – I have briefly analysed only a selection of images which appeared on one blog post – provides a particularly strong illustration of how a blog can provide the space to produce and share content that is local to the person who maintains it. In this case, the content in question is mainly visual, but also incorporates some textual elements through the description of the photographic series and the captions for the various photographs, which situate them within particular named urban neighbourhoods and subareas of the favela. In this way, even when the images are more abstract, there is a clear indication of where they were taken. V. has a particular concern with place and space and so in his case, the local does usually refer to place. Even when his content is not explicitly a representation of place, it tends to refer to events or activities that are in some way territorially embedded, and this is communicated, among other ways, by the information he provides to situate the blog viewer/reader.

The photographs in this series thus illustrate how the locality constructed by a particular content creator spans different places and incorporates movement and circulation, which provides a different way of thinking about local content as a user-generated remapping of urban space, a theme suggested in chapter 5. Recalling the discussion of de Certeau in chapter 4, these photographs reflect the city as experienced by an 'ordinary practitioner', on foot (or occasionally on public transport) and at street level, showing how disparate places are connected in the everyday trajectories of one individual. Different urban locations, connected by a specific theme of V.'s interest, are also brought together in a cluster of posts he produced about government walling of favelas in Rio de Janeiro. Here the content is less about his own movement through places and spaces, but rather about the actual and symbolic limitation of the freedom of movement – and therefore visibility – of favela residents in general, but particularly those living in the affected areas.

Favela walls: A translocal content event and theme

As discussed above, despite the often explicit territorial embeddedness of the content on his blog, with its ongoing focus on Maré, V. also recognised that there were opportunities to take advantage of the blog to develop a broader focus, based on an awareness of the connections between local issues and those which were also relevant to other favelas or the

city as a whole. In this way, the locality of a content site may be renegotiated and reconfigured on an ongoing basis depending on the shifting interests and intentionality of its creator. As an example of this broader focus, V. told me about an article he had published on his blog about the Rio de Janeiro state government's controversial plan to build containment walls around eleven favelas, ostensibly for environmental reasons (a story covered by the local, national and international media during 2009) and his plans to prepare a post about another state government initiative, the provision of free wireless connectivity in several Rio favelas:[377]

> *Eu publiquei um artigo falando dos muros né, que é um assunto mais geral, né, então, cada vez mais blogs são acessados, então você tem mais espaço inclusive para falar dessas coisas mais gerais... Quero escrever uma matéria sobre, uma matéria não... sobre essas projetos digitais que eles instalaram nas favelas, aí é uma coisa mais abrangente, né...* (interview, 8 February 2010)[378]

Both of these examples relate to government policies towards favelas which were originally implemented in areas of the city other than Maré, but which eventually affected Maré directly. Both were also interventions affecting the mobility (and potential visibility) of residents of certain favelas (and eventually residents of Maré), whether in physical space or the new 'informational territories' constructed by the intersection between physical place and electronic flows, such as those enabled by mobile or wireless connectivity (A. Lemos 2010: 405-6).

Posting content about policies such as these on a blog and offering a local perspective shows how the internet can be used to defend what Escobar (2001) has called 'place-based practices'. According to Escobar, this kind of activism involves an 'ongoing tacking back and forth between cyberpolitics and place politics – that is, between political activism in the internet and other network-mediated spaces and activism in the physical location in which the networkers sit and live' (2001: 167) and is one of the most effective types of internet-enabled activism. The 'tacking back and forth' referred to by Escobar also implies that activists can be embedded in different contexts, both place-based and otherwise, recalling Hess. However, the fact that the initiatives mentioned by V. were also being undertaken in other parts of the city provided a translocal dimension, which he used as a 'hook' to expand the scope of the content published on his blog and potentially appeal to a wider audience.

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377 This scheme was discussed in more detail in chapter 3.

378 'I published an article talking about the walls, you know, which is a broader issue, you know, so, blogs are being accessed more and more, so that means you have more space, including to talk about these more general things... I want to write an article about, not an article... about these digital projects which they have set up in favelas, and that's something broader, isn't it...'

This is thus place-based activism, but one which incorporates a networked approach to place and locality.

In fact, the favela walls came to constitute a content theme of sorts on the blog, and a theme that eventually became more directly relevant to V.'s neighbourhood than was initially the case. The translocality of this content theme, or the way that it shifted and was transformed through different contexts of locality, brings to mind the short story competition discussed in chapter 5. The difference is that here the content theme or event began with a translocal or non-local focus and became increasingly localised, whereas the short story competition began with a local focus which gradually expanded out towards a translocal orientation. In this way, the translocal dimension of local content moves in both directions, pulling out from the local to the non-local, or zooming in from the non-local to the local.

V.'s original article on the favela walls was reposted in several places, including the websites of NGOs and social movements and the personal blog of someone living in the north-east of Brazil (who he did not know before the reposting). During the period I followed this content event, V. published at least five further posts relating to the question of walls around favelas, which became increasingly localised when a wall, officially termed a 'barrier',[379] was in turn installed along one of the expressways bordering parts of the Maré favela, this time by the municipal rather than state government.[380] The official discourse about this wall was that it was there to protect favela residents from traffic noise, with the city's mayor declaring, *'É um absurdo você ter pessoas com a autoestrada na frente, fazendo um barulho infernal'* (quoted in Junqueira 2009).[381] On his blog, V. contested this discourse based on his local knowledge, as I will outline below.

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[379] One media report (Junqueira 2009) notes that the municipal administration avoided actually using the term 'wall'.

[380] This is not the first time that walls or barriers around favelas have been proposed or installed in Rio. Jaguaribe and Hetherington (2004: 160) mention that in the early 1970s, representatives of an American tourism confederation attending a conference in Rio de Janeiro drove from the airport into the city 'on a highway flanked by gigantic screens that depicted the Christ statue with the caption "Rio Welcomes ASTA with Open Arms"'. The authors note that the screens were there to hide the favela alongside the highway (which could well have been Maré or a neighbouring community given its location), and argue that 'now the view of the *favela* has been replaced by a democratic competition for various representational recuperations of the *favela*, struggling to cover the unstable terrain of the shantytown' (Jaguaribe & Hetherington 2004: 160, emphasis in original), including tourism. Leu (2008) discusses the proposal made in 2004 by Rio's deputy governor Luiz Paulo Conde to build a wall ringing the favelas of Rocinha and Vidigal, located in the city's southern zone near upper class beachside neighbourhoods, in response to a spate of drug-related violence in the city. As Leu notes (2008: 6), plans for the wall suggested 'a desire to capitalise on that fear [of a class war], in order to create the climate and conditions that justify the perpetuation of a state of exception with regard to the favelas'.

[381] 'It's ridiculous to have people there with the expressway in front of them, making a hellish noise'.

In one of his texts on the subject of walls, which was longer and more formal in tone, V. used information about the geographical location of Maré to argue that the sound barrier argument did not make any sense in practice:

> *A favela da Maré fica entre três vias: Linha Amarela, Linha Vermelha e Avenida Brasil, mas apenas pequenos trechos das construções são próximo dessas vias. Ou seja, a construção de um muro ou barreira de contenção sonora nestas vias como base em tal argumento não tem o menor sentido.* (screenshot 2 February 2010)[382]

As in the descriptive text about V.'s blog analysed earlier on, the presentation of basic facts about the location of the favela where he lives implies that this post could have been written more with an outside audience in mind. In a second, more personal and informal post, which was accompanied by a photograph of the wall taken from the expressway (apparently from inside a moving vehicle),[383] he reflected in the first person on the possible real justifications for building such a wall and shared local reactions to the offical discourse:

> *Por aqui (Maré) quando alguém se refere ao 'muro' e diz que este se destina a 'proteção sonora' chega ser engraçado a reação. Não tem outro jeito se não rir ou fazer um gesto que corresponderia a: 'finge que isto é verdade que eu finjo que isto é mentira'.* (screenshot 19 March 2010)[384]

Later, he published two other posts about local protests and activism against the wall, the first of which (screenshot 12 April 2010) was about a local artist who built himself a cage on stilts next to the expressway; the post was accompanied by photographs, though they were not V.'s own in this case. The second of the posts (screenshot 11 May 2010) reported on an event organised in Maré by a local street carnival band (*bloco*), in which V. also participates,[385] which included the reading aloud of an open letter protesting the walls, and funk music by artists associated with the movement to decriminalise funk music (the text of the letter was included in the post along with photographs of the event, taken by V.). Although these posts about walls were not indexed or aggregated in any way (unlike the historical videos I look at below), two of them included links at the end to 'related posts' (other posts about walls on V.'s blog) and one of the two also included links to 'other opinions' (external links to content by other groups about walls in favelas) at the end.

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[382] 'The Maré favela is located between three roads: the Linha Amarela, the Linha Vermelha, and Avenida Brasil, but only small sections of the buildings are close to these roads. In other words, building a wall or sound barrier along these roads based on that argument does not make any sense whatsoever.'

[383] This photograph was sourced from another local blog.

[384] 'Round here (Maré) when someone refers to the "wall" and says that its purpose is "sound protection" the reaction is quite amusing. There is nothing else to do but to laugh or make a gesture which could be interpreted as "you pretend that it's true and I'll pretend that it's a lie"'.

[385] The *bloco* itself can be understood as an example of the 'place-based practices' discussed earlier in the chapter.

This cluster of related posts illustrates how a strand of content which originally reflected a translocal interest in (and solidarity with) issues affecting other favelas, or favelas in general, ultimately became strongly localised or territorially embedded when the same issue then directly affected the area where the blogger lives. It also shows how internet content creation can be a site of place-based activism, intertwining online and offline and linking to the forms of 'offline' activism mentioned in the preceding paragraph in an attempt to shape, or at least debate and comment on, government policy as it affects local – and translocal – place. The blog reports on local place-based activism against the walls, but it is also used as a site of such activism in itself. However, as indicated in the introduction, the place-based focus of V.'s blog also occasionally stretches beyond Maré, and even beyond Rio and its favelas, to incorporate content about the Brazilian north-east. This illustrates how the particular context of the locality of a blog can be a reflection of its creator's embeddedness in multiple contexts, and can also shift and evolve in response to events. The following section considers these content connections to V.'s identity as a migrant.

Content connections: The Brazilian north-east

A further dimension to the translocality of V.'s content and associated practices was observed when content about his origins in the Brazilian north-east appeared on his personal blog – as I have already outlined, this tends to be more focused on the neighbourhood and city where he now lives. It is worth remembering, however, as outlined in the introduction to this chapter, that V. has also set up and maintains a local content blog and linked Orkut community for his birthplace. However, he told me that these served mostly as *'um canal de comunicação'* (interview, 8 February 2010)[386] between people living in his hometown and others, like himself, who had migrated and were living elsewhere in Brazil. V. therefore engages not only with different places but also with different types of local content production and sharing over the internet, for different audiences. On his main blog, however, he only very occasionally posts content directly about the north-east, although north-eastern culture is also part of some aspects of life in Rio de Janeiro and in Maré.

When I interviewed V., for example, he told me that he was working on a post about *forró* in Maré, which involved the development of a small map, accompanied by a short text and some photographs. *Forró* is a type of music typical of north-east Brazil which has spread to

[386] 'a communication channel'

the rest of the country as a result of internal migration, musical recordings and radio (Phaelante da Câmara, n.d.).[387] The idea for a post about *forró* had arisen when he went to photograph a large and well-known *forró* venue in the favela for a blog based in the north-east, which had invited him to contribute content on the manifestations of the region's culture in Rio de Janeiro.[388] For that blog, he was preparing a post which would cover *forró* venues across the whole city. However, given the favela where he lives is particularly well-known for its migrant population and for commerce and cultural events associated with the north-east, he began to map other *forró* venues there, both large-scale weekend events in different areas of the favela and smaller gatherings in bars, and to gather material to illustrate the post. At the time of writing up this research, he has not yet published this content on his personal blog, which suggests that ideas for posts may germinate for some time before actually being published, if at all. However, having access to a blog as a potential publication venue can serve as a stimulus for moving the content creation process along, once an idea has arisen. In V.'s words, '*facilita porque eu tenho o espaço para de repente fazer e não ficar parado. De alguma forma eu tenho um espaço para publicar então posso me aventurar a fazer*' (interview, 8 February 2010).[389]

On two particular occasions during my research, V. posted content specifically about his hometown on his personal blog, thereby weaving his origins in the north-east into its ecology of local content. Here we can see that his blog is translocal in the sense of revealing his identification with more than one location. After a trip home to the north-east, V. posted a photograph of a dirt road connecting his village to a nearby town (on which readers could click to gain access to other photographs from the trip) accompanied by a paragraph of text commenting on the challenges faced by the region which, he suggested, were exemplified in the conditions of the road. The text and the image complemented each other in conveying

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[387] As Phaelante da Câmara (n.d.: n.p) writes, '[t]oday, forró is not only a venue, a setting or a style of enjoyment. It stands for a joyful and festive North-east. And, this identity is valid throughout the national territory' [*'Hoje, ele não é apenas local, ambiente ou estilo de divertimento. Em sua carteira de identidade, o forró é o Nordeste alegre e festivo. E, essa identidade é válida em todo o território nacional'*].

[388] Some of these manifestations are discussed by Cordeiro Barbosa (2009: 364-371), who describes the Feira de São Cristóvão, a large leisure complex in northern Rio made up of small shops and stands selling typical foods, handicrafts and other products from the Brazilian north-east as well as bars and restaurants serving typical food and drink, as a location where migrants from the region meet up and reaffirm their identity. He also mentions other similar locations including specific squares in the Copacabana and Rocinha neighbourhoods, a market in the town of Duque de Caxias in Rio's metropolitan area, and a famous *forró* venue in the nightlife district of Lapa, as well as *festas juninas* and family gatherings. *Festas juninas* are festivities originating in the Brazilian north-east which take place in June each year on specific saints' days (*festas julinas* are the July equivalent). These events involve dressing up in traditional costumes, country dancing and typical food and drink, and are very popular in Rio de Janeiro.

[389] 'it makes it easier because I have the space to perhaps do it and not stall. In one way or another I have a space to publish so I can take the risk of going ahead and doing it'

this message. V. concluded by commenting that the trip home had been thought-provoking: '*durante esses poucos dias revivi a vida difícil e esquecida do interior do nordeste brasileiro*' (screenshot, 11 December 2009).[390] The contents of this post (the photograph and short text) were also circulated by email via one of V.'s distribution lists (which I was part of), implying that he considered it to be particularly important or relevant to that group of people. Just under a month later, V. again posted content on his blog relating to his place of birth, this time commenting on a long-running land dispute between two north-eastern states which directly affected his village. The post was stimulated by coverage of the dispute in a national newspaper, although V. had already been following and documenting coverage in mainly regional media and blogs for some time. As in the case of the post on local reactions to the walls along the expressway in Maré, he provided details based on his own experience and embeddedness in the local context, commenting on the difficulties in access to health, education and transport services in the area affected by the border dispute. The post was also accompanied by two YouTube videos, shot by V., which showed the village and the same road shown in the photograph on the other post mentioned above.[391]

Both the cluster of posts about favela walls and the Maré wall specifically, and these two posts about challenges faced by the north-east of Brazil and V.'s village, can be seen as an attempt to afford greater visibility to questions about which the blogger has localised knowledge. Whilst the visibility in question might still be relatively limited, these examples illustrate how the internet provides ordinary people with a platform to comment on specific policies and broader conjunctures affecting places in which they are embedded. The examples also show how the locality of content sites is not static or fixed but rather reflects a more complex and diverse ecology constructed by and around their creators, which is constantly evolving to incorporate the different empirical scales identified by Appadurai, as discussed in chapter 1. The shifting, plural locality of content also reflects the mobility of content creators, both within the city (as in the mobile phone photographs discussed in an earlier section and the potentially constrained mobility touched on in the section on favela walls), and in this example, as a reflection of migratory experience.

In the following section, I once again focus more directly on content produced by V. about favelas, and discuss the specific issues, in other words the opportunities and constraints, associated with giving non-local visibility to their local realities using the internet, linking this

[390] 'during these few days I relived the difficult and forgotten life of the Brazilian north-east'
[391] These videos are discussed in a little more detail later in the chapter, in the section on videos.

to broader questions about the challenges associated with the representation of favelas in the contemporary context, which were explored in chapter 3.

Negotiating the visibility of local content

Although V. publishes content relating to local occurrences or issues affecting Maré on his blog, he told me that he sees this aspect of his blog as '*uma coisa mais para fora*' (interview, 8 February 2010).[392] He made a comparison, in this respect, between his blog and local newspapers produced by NGOs, distributed locally for local consumption, which he views as tending to focus on questions specifically of interest to local residents.[393] The other difference, of course, is that these community media are more collective, or even institutional undertakings, which may translate into a different understanding of local content than the one being put forward here which is centred on the ecology of locality produced by individuals. Institutional local content tied to place is more likely to focus on local news and information than on self-reflexive representation of place.

As boyd has noted, the emergence of tools such as blogs and social network sites which enable ordinary people to produce and publish content means that they must themselves negotiate complex 'ruptures' to 'publicity, privacy, and social context' (2008: 23). As the following interview extract shows, the potential global or non-local visibility afforded to local content by the internet is something which V. grapples with and negotiates on an ongoing basis:

> *Quando eu publico alguma coisa na internet há a possibilidade do mundo inteiro ver aquilo, né, então, assim, [...] eu às vezes fico me prendendo, é porque, [...] ao mesmo tempo que eu falo de uma coisa local, eu sei que aquilo é global, assim, entendeu. Então assim, pode ser que um assunto que eu fale só interesse aos moradores daqui. Só que assim, isso tá para o mundo né. [...] Aí na verdade eu tenho na verdade sempre que me monitorar sobre isso. Para não falar de coisas muito locais. Eu falo dessas locais, mas acabo às vezes tentando expandir, né, para... porque assim, blog tá na rede, tá na rede mundial, né, então...* (interview, 8 February 2010)[394]

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[392] 'something more for an outside audience'. It is interesting to contrast this with the emphasis he places on a local audience, showing that he is aware of both local and non-local audiences.

[393] It is worth pointing out that both the local newspapers in question are now available in some shape or form via the internet and therefore accessible also by non-residents. One has a linked blog (not necessarily publishing the actual newspaper content) whilst the other can be downloaded in PDF format from an NGO website, and both have a Twitter account.

[394] 'When I publish something on the internet there is the possibility of the whole world seeing that, isn't there, so, you know, [...] sometimes I hold back a bit, because [...] at the same time that I'm talking about something local, I know that it's global, you know. So, you know, it might be that something I'm talking about is only of interest to people who live here. But you know, it's out there for the world to see. [...] So really I actually have to monitor myself in relation to that. So that I don't talk about very local things. I talk about these local things, but sometimes I

V.'s comments suggest that some tensions and dilemmas may arise from the potential juxtaposition of different actual and imagined audiences for his content, from local to non-local and even global. However, he also seems to actively take this potential non-local visibility into consideration when he publishes content on his blog. His reflections also point to how a single blog may incorporate a range of contexts of locality across different posts, which are implicitly written for different audiences even if they are all published and available in the same place. A similarly plural ecology of locality across different content items was implied by J.'s comment, included in chapter 4, about how he targets different audiences through the use of specific language. Despite the unpredictable nature of the visibility that content published on the internet can achieve, this is likely to be affected by the effort invested in its dissemination. Some people may consciously seek some degree of visibility, others may prefer to limit (or do nothing to counter the limits of) the visibility of their internet content creation to a smaller audience, which might be geographically local, associated with a particular interest group, or restricted to friends and acquaintances.[395]

In chapter 3, I discussed some of the ways that user-generated content about favelas has gained visibility, whether through its aggregation in largely NGO-run projects or by being picked up and highlighted by the mainstream media. V.'s own blog has been featured in articles about blogging in favelas published by NGOs and the mainstream media. He suggested that this type of coverage potentially contributed to bringing greater visibility not just to favela residents' blogs themselves, but also to issues about everyday life in particular favelas, or in favelas more generally. He felt that this also helped to counter the idea that people living in favelas did not have access to spaces in which to write or express their opinions. He told me that he knows of other people in his favela who maintain blogs, but thinks that they perhaps do not publicise them widely as he does (and by implication, perhaps gain less visibility). However, he is also aware of the communicative strength that might come from linking favela blogs in some way, an idea which he has explored with others involved in the production of such blogs (both in his own favela and in other favelas). This would be a way of linking local blogs in a translocal formation specifically oriented to attaining greater visibility.

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end up trying to expand a bit, you know, ... because the blog is on the web, it's on the world wide web, you know, so...'

[395] Visibility is also connected to privacy. See Viégas (2005) for a discussion of bloggers' expectations of privacy.

Reflecting its ongoing local focus on Maré, V.'s blog includes a stream of content about social and cultural events taking place in the area. These posts are sometimes made in advance of events (announcing that they will take place, in which case he often reposts associated publicity materials), or sometimes retrospectively (in this case he usually provides predominantly visual documentation, via photographs, of a single event or a sequence of different events which have taken place, say, over the course of a weekend). Mentioning the recent activities of the local carnival '*bloco*' as an example of a local event covered on his blog, V. noted that posting this kind of content sometimes encouraged him to adjust his way of writing, to write in what he described as 'a less local way':

> *é uma coisa local, de interesse local, mas quando tá na rede, né, é mundial, né, então acho que às vezes até me força a tentar escrever na verdade não de forma muito local, por mais que o assunto seja de interesse local, né.* (interview, 8 February 2010)[396]

While he did not say exactly what he meant by writing in a less local way, there are similarities here with some of the issues discussed in chapter 4 about the use of language as a way of engaging with different audiences. However, in this case, rather than the use of favela slang, it seems that writing in a non-local way probably refers to the degree of background information about Maré which V. sometimes provides as a way of situating potential non-local readers both in posts about local events, as well as in the general text about the blog and its focus which I cited earlier in this chapter. For example, in a post about the *bloco*, he commented on media coverage of his neighbourhood, noting that

> *nem sempre o bairro é retratado pela sua diversidade e alegria. O mote para as reportagens é sempre a que envereda pela ótica negativa.* (screenshot, 5 February 2010)[397]

As the discussion in chapter 2 showed, visibility is not neutral and can be both positive and negative (and everything in between). Here V. draws attention to the negative visibility of favelas in media reports, which overlook positive sides of life in Maré, and presents the *bloco* as one cultural activity taking place locally which counters such negative representations, albeit one which incorporates activism inspired by specific local challenges. However, as the next section of the chapter shows, V. is aware of the potential pitfalls of positioning his own content creation at either extreme of the continuum which exists between positive and negative portrayals of favelas.

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[396] 'it's a local thing, of local interest, but when it's on the web, you know, it's global, isn't it, so I think that this sometimes even forces me to try to write actually in not a very local way, even if the subject is of local interest, you know'

[397] 'the diversity and joyfulness of the neighbourhood is not always portrayed. The formula for reports tends towards a negative perspective'

In the same post about the *bloco*, V. went on to provide some background on how it arose, and how it is embedded in a particular local context, which he characterises as 'diverse and complex':

> *Um dos problemas que atinge a comunidade da Maré é o sério problema de trânsito entre as 16 comunidades, principalmente pelos jovens que são os mais atingidos diretamente com a atuação dos grupos criminosos. Neste contexto diverso e complexo nasce o bloco [...]. Um bloco que surge com o intuito de estimular a circulação dos moradores pela comunidade e pela cidade.* (screenshot, 5 February 2010)[398]

This careful contextualisation of the carnival band's activities demonstrates how visibility is a consequence not just of the subject matter of content, but also the language and information used to frame it. In this way, some of V.'s content is, to use Blommaert's phrase, 'written *for* globalisation, with the explicit purpose of being read by people from outside the community of their composers' (2008: 6; emphasis in original). However, at the same time as he directs some of the content on his blog to an imagined non-local audience, he is also aware of, and to some extent caters to, a local audience. For example, he mentioned comments on a post about the wireless connectivity along the expressway to me as an indication of the kind of content published on his blog that was of most interest and relevance to such readers. Overall, however, his more didactic content about favelas in general and his neighbourhood in particular shows an awareness of the charged context of favela representation and the possibility that some of his readers may be influenced by biased mainstream narratives. His post about the *bloco* incorporates material which gives visibility to both 'positive' and 'negative' aspects of life in Maré, but carefully frames and situates the latter.

The complexity of favela representation: Not just serious or sad

Content creators such as V. are working in the context of the representational crisis and conflict surrounding favelas which I used to structure my discussion in chapter 3. The material presented in chapters 4 and 5 and in this case study show that content creators from the favela are very much aware of existing portrayals and perceptions of their neighbourhoods and of themselves as favela residents when they make their own contributions to the 'web' (in both senses of the term) of representations surrounding favelas, which I also mentioned briefly at the end of chapter 4. My analysis shows that these content

[398] 'One of the problems affecting the community of Maré is the serious problem of free movement between the 16 communities, especially for young people who are those most directly affected by the activities of criminal groups. It is in this diverse and complex context that the [...] *bloco* came into being. A *bloco* which was born with the aim of stimulating the circulation of residents within the community and the city as a whole.'

creators seek to combat the negative visibility of favelas – by which I mean both their association with crime and violence in the mainstream media, and their invisibility in other sections of the news – with a differential, more nuanced (and sometimes outrightly positive) visibility, seeking to add broader and more diverse representations and voices to the mix.

I asked V. what he thought about the differences between content produced by favela residents and other content circulating about the favela. Although he stressed the superficiality of mainstream media coverage of the favela, noting that '*se você acompanha por exemplo, só pelo jornal [...], você tem uma coisa muito rasa*' (interview 8 February 2010),[399] he also avoided an either-or distinction between the perspective of residents (insiders) and non-residents (outsiders). Rather, he spoke of the need for those producing representations to be able to understand and express the complexity of the favela. He felt residents were perhaps more likely to be able to do this due to '*vivência*', or lived experience:

> *Se você tem um entendimento dessa complexidade, assim acho que tanto quem tá fora quanto quem tá dentro é perfeitamente possível de produzir algo que seja, que não seja desrespeituoso, que [...] tenha minimamente essa qualidade. Mas [...] quem tá dentro tem essa possibilidade maior de estar próximo, de estar presente, e [...] ter um conhecimento anterior pela própria vivência né, então isso pode possibilitar uma criação de algo mais... algo que seja mais aproximado, né.* (interview 8 February 2010)[400]

However, he also noted that this proximity and embeddedness in a particular local setting also meant that it was harder for residents (than for outsiders) to address certain aspects of favela life in content, such as issues linked to the presence of drug traffickers in the area. Nonetheless, his comments are interesting given the discussion in chapter 1 of how the notion of proximity, understood as 'how we experience what is near' (Gordon 2008: n.p.), is being reworked through networked forms of locality. V. seems to suggest that despite Gordon's suggestion (2008: n.p.) that local knowledge about a place can be acquired via the internet or mobile phone, without going there in person, embeddedness remains important for local content creation.

The complexity (and diversity) of favela life was encapsulated and foregrounded in a summary post published by V. at the end of 2009, with highlights of posts from the year. Constructed from a combination of text (including hyperlinks to other posts), photographs and

[399] 'if you follow things for example, just in the newspaper, [...] you get something very shallow'

[400] 'If you have an understanding of this complexity, I think both those on the outside and those on the inside are perfectly capable of producing something that is, that is not disrespectful, which [...] at the very least has that quality. But [...] those who are on the inside have a greater chance of being close, of being present, and [...] having a prior knowledge based on experience, you know, and that can make it possible to create something more... something that that is a little closer, you know.'

videos, the post summarised the year on the blog (a total of 85 posts), and – given the high proportion of content about Maré – highlights of the year in the favela as portrayed on the blog. In the post, V. emphasised that '*a vida na Maré não é só coisas sérias ou tristezas*',[401] (screenshot, 30 December 2009), and thereby foregrounded the inclusion of stories about both violence *and* the cultural capital of the favela in the summary.[402] Content themes relating to violence referenced in the summary post included the shooting of a young man from the favela by the police and a violent conflict between drug factions which took place in the area during 2009, which I also discussed in chapter 4. The summary also covered the protests of local residents in response to both of these situations, and illustrated these in photographs, resulting in greater visual impact. In the section of his post about the conflict, V. links to a poem co-authored with a fellow local blogger about the conflict which he had posted on his blog. He also highlights residents' own coverage of the demonstration in the absence of proper attention from the mainstream media: '*Os moradores foram para a rua pedir um basta. Bom acho que não precisa dizer que a imprensa aqui não veio então tivemos que nós mesmo fazer a cobertura*'.[403]

The summary also mentions a conference on public security organised by a local NGO. Content more closely related to the cultural capital of the favela included a poem written about the carnival *bloco*,[404] mention of *festas julinas*[405] held in the local area, a photograph of one of the oldest residents of one subarea of the favela, two historical videos (part of a series discussed in more detail below), a report on a local theatre group and the anniversary of a local football team. The summary also linked to a post on the government's wireless internet scheme in the area. However, the summary post also went beyond the geographically local, referencing content published by V. about government policy, media coverage of favelas and the ethics of the media more broadly, an NGO-run project in another favela, an annual social movement protest in the centre of Rio and International Human Rights Day. The summary also included the photograph posted by V. after his trip home to the north-east of Brazil, discussed in an earlier section of this chapter.

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[401] 'life in Maré is not just serious things or sadness'

[402] This also recalls V.'s definition of favelas published on the background text about his blog, cited in the section of this chapter headed 'Local embeddedness: From the favela to the city', where he affirms that favelas are characterised by 'the existence of the beautiful, the ugly, the happy, the curious, the good, the unjust, the violent and the violated'.

[403] 'Residents took to the streets to call for an end to the conflict. Well I think it goes without saying that the press did not come here so we had to produce our own coverage'.

[404] Following the earlier discussion about writing in a more or less local way, a poem about the carnival *bloco* might be considered a more local way of writing about it compared to the other, more informative and didactic post mentioned in the previous section.

[405] See footnote on page 216.

Reflecting on his assertion in the summary post that life in Maré is not characterised only by serious things or sadness, which I mentioned on the previous page, V. again talked about the challenges involved in selecting, preparing and publishing content about the favela on the blog. He drew attention to the existence of events that could fall at both positive and negative extremes of the representational continuum, as well as the milestones of everyday life:

> *E aí na hora de documentar isso, ou de representar, você acaba às vezes caindo numa de ir só para um lado, né – ou você é muito poético, ou você é muito essa coisa de não ser tão poético, né, a realidade dura, e tal. Só que assim, existem as duas, assim né, é a realidade dura e essa coisa mais... que realmente inspira poesia, né, então... Eu até falei na reunião [...] que se eu... acho que assim, se eu conseguisse dar conta dessa representação, sei lá, que você ia ser considerado meio maluco porque num momento você faz uma coisa totalmente... essa coisa da explosão, da felicidade, da troca,... e em outros momentos você tem esses momentos de conflito, de embate, de... que realmente, assim, precisam também [...] ser documentados, né, então você acaba tendo que ter essas duas, tendo que entender essa complexidade, né, porque... senão é, o policial que matou o menino, você de repente não pode ir lá porque você se recusa a documentar essa coisa porque você prefere uma parte mais alegre, mais, né, ou então vice versa, né. Fora as coisas mais corriqueiras que acontecem né, festa de casamento, aniversário, né. Então assim, tem essa coisa toda né.*[406]

These reflections on the challenges associated with the creation and publication of local content about favelas on the internet draw attention to how 'the favela refuses easy representations' (Jaguaribe & Hetherington 2004: 164) and show how local content creators such as V. and the others discussed in this thesis carefully negotiate a path between the poetry of favela life and its sometimes harsh reality, trying also to portray the practices of everyday life.

The following, and final, section of the chapter will examine how local content creation by ordinary people does not necessarily mean the generation of new content, but can also include the collection, curation, aggregation and presentation of existing content in new formats or locations. Such activity is therefore an example of how 'people take advantage of new technologies that enable them to archive, annotate, appropriate, and recirculate media

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[406] 'And then when it comes to documenting, or representing this, you end up sometimes falling into the trap of just giving one side of the story, you know - either you're very poetic, or you do that thing of not being very poetic, you know, the harsh reality and so on. But actually, both sides exist, you know, there is harsh reality and that side that is more... that really inspires poetry, so... I even mentioned this at the meeting [...] that if I... I think that, you know, if I managed to do justice to this representation, who knows, that you would be considered a bit crazy because one moment you do something totally, that thing of an explosion of happiness, exchange,... and at other moments you have these moments of conflict, of clash, of... which really, you know, also need [...] to be documented, don't they, so you end up having to deal with both of these, having to understand this complexity, you know, because otherwise, the policeman who killed the child, you perhaps don't want to go there because you refuse to document that side because you prefer the happier side of things, but, you know, or otherwise, vice versa. Never mind the more routine things that happen, you know, wedding parties, birthdays, and so on. So you have all of this, you know.'

content' (Jenkins 2006: 140).[407] The activities described in the following section show how the efforts of a local content creator have resulted in the wider availability, on the internet, of historical videos about Maré, most of which were made before digital video technology was widely accessible.

Local content curation: Historical videos on YouTube

Scholars working in a Brazilian context have drawn attention to how digital media tools are being used to construct memory and history in everyday settings. For example, Jean Segata describes how members of an Orkut community associated with his alma mater in a southern Brazilian town shared their memories in its forum and together wrote their own history:

> Over the course of the topic, these small pieces of information which went beyond the original question, came together to form parallel histories, which in actual fact composed an overall history of the school as well as of the town of Lontras. (2008: 77)[408]

Similarly, in her ethnographic research in *lan houses* in a Rio de Janeiro favela, Barros (2008: 204) found that local youth used social media in the construction of what she calls a textual and visual 'collective sentimental memory',[409] of daily life in the local area. Whilst my study focuses largely on blogs and their communicative circuits, rather than directly on Orkut, these references shed light on the 'informal and organic' (Franklin 2004: 101) ways in which internet users in Brazil, including those in favelas, are using the internet to construct and share memories and local history.

In this context, V. has digitised, and then posted on his blog, a series of videos about Maré produced over the past three decades by a mainstream media organisation, a filmmaker, and local residents participating in projects run by local community organisations or NGOs. He uploaded and stored the videos on YouTube before posting them to his blog using embedded YouTube player windows. Where relevant, he sourced the original videos in non-digital format, and digitised them before converting them into the format accepted by YouTube. On his blog, he publicised the videos via a banner on the homepage, included the videos in blog posts, and also created a static blog page specifically for videos. These tasks and the use of YouTube illustrate the argument made by Gehl (2009: 46-47) that YouTube

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[407] Although Jenkins considers that this creativity has found particularly fertile ground in the internet, he also traces its development through older technologies such as the photocopier, desktop publishing and the videocasette.

[408] *'Ao longo do tópico, essas pequenas informações para além da pergunta inicial, foram compondo histórias paralelas, que na verdade compuseram uma grande história do Colégio e mesmo da cidade de Lontras'*

[409] *'memória sentimental coletiva'*

should be understood as an archive, and that its users serve as its curators, taking responsibility for storage and classification, and investing their time, equipment and resources (such as access to a computer, broadband internet and editing software) in the process. Indeed, more broadly, as I mentioned in chapter 1, scholars have drawn attention to the resources – and literacies – required for the creation and curation of content on the internet, and these are demonstrably employed by V. in his work on the videos.

As well as a curator of storage, in this case V. also served one of YouTube's 'curators of display' (Gehl 2009: 50), by posting and publicising the videos on his blog.[410] Although Gehl (2009: 48) suggests that YouTube videos are 'decontextualized, chaotic and flattened' in the archive, like 'objects sitting on shelves', I contend that in this case, V. in fact relocalised, reembedded and recontextualised the videos, which he had himself uploaded to the global YouTube archive, by organising them into a series and posting them on his blog. He took advantage of the (global) archival function of YouTube, but positioned the videos stored there within the local multimedia content archived on his blog – itself with potential translocal visibility, as discussed above. More broadly, these efforts also resulted in wider availability of digital audiovisual material about his neighbourhood.

The posting of the videos in chronological order on V.'s blog illustrates not only the historical development of Maré over the decades, but also the development of video technology and its use in the representation of favelas and the increasing participation of residents in this process. Zanetti (2010a) has traced the origins of the current trend towards a '*cinema de periferia*' in Brazil (and particularly its urban areas) through earlier movements, in particular popular video which gave way, in the 1990s, to community video (Alvarenga 2004 cited in Zanetti 2010a: 37). The focus thus shifted from the activist use of video by social movements working for social transformation to an emphasis on democratic participation and the development of audiovisual training workshops targeted particularly at low-income youth. Zanetti also notes the key role played by digital technologies in expanding the possibilities for the production, exhibition and circulation of videos produced in Brazilian urban peripheries, the latter including websites, festivals and associated publicity materials.

[410] According to Gehl (2009: 49), this role is normally undertaken by so-called intermediaries, such as media entrepreneurs and media companies, who exploit the labour of YouTube users and make a profit from their videos.

The first video posted in V.'s series was a black and white *TV Globo* documentary, dating from the late 1970s or early 1980s, which focused on the *palafitas* which were traditionally characteristic of Maré, and the challenges faced by local residents; it shows a ceremony at which local people gained the title to their houses, part of the Projeto Rio mentioned briefly in the description of Maré at the end of chapter 3. It shares with the second video the fact that it is mainly filmed from the water (from Guanabara Bay), rather than inside the community, and the fact that it was made by 'outsiders'. This second video, a colour film from 1981, by an individual filmmaker, is less polished and apparently unedited, and rather than a professional voiceover, the soundtrack is provided by the sound of the boat's motor, occasional discussion between the occupants of the boat including instructions on what to do with the camera and commentary of what they can see, and a voice reading from what appears to be some kind of diary. People are visible on the water's edge, watching the boat, playing *capoeira*, flying a kite. The narrator also provides some geographical orientation as the boat passes by different areas of the favela.

The following two videos in the series are two parts of a documentary about a struggle for decent housing and a resulting housing project in one area of Maré, and date from the 1990s. Local residents received training and made the film themselves. They provide the voiceover narration and also appear in the film carrying out interviews with other residents. Not only is the film made by local people, therefore, but local people are protagonists in it and speak for themselves, sharing their memories and perspectives. As the film itself notes, this is history '*contados por eles próprios*' ('history told by people themselves'), a kind of oral history on video, although there was very likely some intervention and support by the project organisers, for example in the final editing process. The interviewees, who are mainly women, talk about where they lived previously, and the circumstances that led them to move to the favela. They mention the difficulties they faced in the precarious housing they originally occupied in the area, such as lack of running water, the risk of being run over when crossing the expressway, flooding, rats and so on. These interviews take place in the street (with many curious onlookers) or inside houses. There are also images of meetings at the residents' association, accompanied by memories of the process of getting organised to demand government support and funding for the housing project. The film shows images of the new housing under construction, and interviewees discuss the ongoing difficulties associated with living there, and which aspects require improvement. The credits for the video indicate that it was supported by the *Caixa Econômica Federal* (a federal government savings bank), which also funded the housing project itself. The blogger told me that after he

had digitised and uploaded this particular film to YouTube, it was then also shown at an open-air cineclub organised by a local NGO active in the same area, where many of the people who appeared in the film still live. In this way local content curated for the internet was also made available to residents without an internet connection (a further example of how content can travel from the online to the offline, a flow which has also been discussed in chapters 4 and 5 in relation to internet texts appearing in print).

The final video in the series (thus far) was a film made using digital technology in 2006 by a group of young people taking part in a grassroots media training programme organised by an NGO based in the favela. The theme of the film was the market which takes place on one of the favela's main streets every Saturday, selling fruit and vegetables, fish, clothing, music and more. The film emphasises the cultural diversity of the local area and the different neighbourhoods of Rio's metropolitan area represented at the market through its stallkeepers and customers. Although there is some voiceover narration, the majority of the film is made up of interviews with stallkeepers, market customers and local shopkeepers who talk about the positive and negative aspects of the market and the changes it has undergone in its forty-year history. As in the previous two videos, the film was made with the support of an NGO but the makers and protagonists of the film are local people.

As well as the progression in the videos themselves from outsider perspectives to the insider perspectives made possible by the growing availability and falling cost of the necessary video technology, and the involvement of NGOs and community groups in participatory film-making and citizens' media, the fact that the videos are available on the internet and organised into a series is thanks to the personal and largely non-institutional efforts of a blogger, although his access to the original videos was also facilitated by personal and institutional connections. As outlined above, he took the initiative to source, digitise, upload and publish the videos, thereby making available an archive of local history in video format. This illustrates how local content creators are not always necessarily involved in producing original material, but may also play an important role in sourcing, organising, aggregating and (re)packaging local content from other sources, thereby making it available to new audiences and contributing to a distributed archive. Indeed, this is not unique to local content creators, but reflects the trend identified by Jenkins (2006: 140) for ordinary internet users to be involved in archiving and recirculating media content. The availability of such content on the internet may be of use, for example, to schoolchildren doing research for schoolwork in

local *lan houses*, and more generally to other internet users searching for content about Maré.

Finally, it is worth pointing out that as well as curating content produced by others, V. has on occasion also produced his own original audiovisual content. For example, on a trip home to the north-east of Brazil, he rode around his village on the back of a motorcycle with a friend, holding a video camera. The aim was to produce '*um registro do lugar*' (interview, 8 February 2010),[411] or a multimedia record of a particular place in the present day. V. then edited the video and posted it on YouTube and the village blog, where it was viewed by people living in the village as well as people like himself, born in the village but now living in other Brazilian cities. There are echoes here of Segata's (2008: 75) description of how digital media platforms can enable people to 'in some way go back'[412] to places they frequented in the past. V. believes that the combination of cheaper, smaller hardware for making videos (including mobile phone cameras) and platforms such as Orkut (and blogs) where the resulting videos could then be shared, has opened up the possibility of producing and disseminating this type of material, although he also acknowledges that barriers to access remain. Indeed, the connectivity available in his home village is much worse than that in the Rio favela where he lives, and it is only recently, with the arrival of a telecentre, that broadband has been available in the village.[413]

Conclusion

As the analysis of V.'s blog and selected extracts from it has shown, the content published on V.'s blog is rich and extensive and has much to reveal about the production of locality on the internet and the way that individuals construct and interact with different contexts of locality through their content. As a realisation of the concept of the 'placeworld', I conclude that the 'local' in V.'s local content is fluid and takes in subareas of Maré, the Maré complex as a whole, the city of Rio, favelas collectively, north-eastern culture, as well as other places. It shifts and reconfigures itself in response to events, taking on different boundaries and compositions. The act of representation is a key concern, particularly given V.'s awareness of an 'outsider' or non-local audience, the complex issues involved in portraying favelas, and

[411] 'a record of the place'
[412] '*de alguma forma voltar*'
[413] As I noted in chapter 3, research has shown that levels of internet access in favelas is higher than that in state capitals in the north-east of Brazil.

the translocal visibility afforded by the internet, and this affects the filtering of the local content which he publishes.

Movement has also been a key theme of the chapter, firstly in the discussion of how V. charts his own trajectories through the city using a cameraphone, and secondly in the expression, in content flows on V.'s blog, of the flows of people and culture that connect the Brazilian north-east to Maré. In this way, V.'s blog (and his wider content creation) can be understood as a project, albeit personal rather than institutional, oriented around place which expresses his own ecology of locality, and how the different empirical scales of that locality are connected and overlap. V. engages with place via photography, writing, video production and curation, and in the ongoing shaping of his blog. He also engages in place-based activism, for example through participation in his local carnival *bloco,* which he in turn represents in content on his blog. Overall, the activities described in this chapter echo an observation made by Reed (2008: 391), that his research into blogging in London was fundamentally about how London bloggers 'constitute their city'. V. and the other content creators discussed in this thesis are also engaged in constituting their city, but before that, they seek to constitute their neighbourhood and to go beyond the mainstream representations that stigmatise it and overlook its diversity. In this way, recalling an observation by Escobar (2001: 143) cited in chapter 1, my research has been about local content creators' engagement in constructing, imagining and struggling over place.

Conclusion

This thesis has focused on local content creation and dissemination by Brazilian favela residents using web 2.0 platforms such as blogs, social network sites, microblogs and video-sharing sites, as well as email and occasionally print formats. It has suggested that the emergence of web 2.0 has widened the possibilities for the production of local content and in particular, the representation of place on the internet by ordinary people, and has provided in-depth case studies showing how and why individual residents of a Rio de Janeiro favela engage in such activities. Web 2.0 platforms can be customised and updated relatively easily and quickly, and can enable users to localise and territorially embed their content, but also to reach potentially wide and diverse audiences, particularly when used in a complementary fashion as in the communicative circuits which have been discussed here.

Reflecting the way territory operates in Rio de Janeiro as a powerful site of both stigma and affirmation, place was a central theme in the work of the content creators discussed in this thesis. They used textual and visual resources to territorially embed their content, whether the body of the content or the content framing it, and targeted varied audiences (especially those who were local to that content in some way) in their dissemination of their content. Their use of the internet was embedded in place, both in a specific favela and in the place occupied by favelas in the popular imagination and the particular territoriality of the city of Rio de Janeiro. As I have shown, however, the local content produced by J., A., and V. also affirms their favela as a place which is connected in multiple and fundamental ways to other favelas and urban periphery neighbourhoods, as well as to the city. They thus position their favela, and favelas collectively, as an inherent part of the city, and challenge discourses that marginalise these areas.

As the thesis has demonstrated, favela residents who create local content relating to their neighbourhood and publish it on the internet explicitly negotiate the opportunities and constraints associated with its translocal visibility. They are aware of, and sometimes explicitly cater to, potential external audiences as well as the biases in dominant narratives about favelas and their residents, and attempt to negotiate these considerations when framing their content. Chapter 4 showed how J. exploited the internet's translocality, and his own translocal connections, in his attempts to ensure the wide and swift circulation of his text, at the same time as some of the language he used in the text embedded it firmly in his place of residence and was intended to be familiar to others living there. He also quoted

media coverage in his text, which was self-reflexive in its portrayal of a violent episode in favela life. Chapter 5 discussed how A. used profile information on her blog to emphasise that her aim in publishing her literary texts was to show that Maré, and Rio's favelas more generally, were capable of producing art, poetry and beauty and not just criminality. She also benefited from translocal connections established via the internet when it came to selling her first self-published book and developing and publicising the writing competitions she ran, which began with a local focus on Maré before evolving to embrace texts written by residents of favelas, suburbs and urban periphery areas throughout Brazil. Similarly, chapter 6 examined the carefully prepared background information about Maré provided by V. on his blog, which clearly allows for a non-local audience. He uses his blog in an attempt to afford greater visibility to questions about which he has localised knowledge, whether this is events in Maré itself, wider issues such as favela walls, or occasionally, challenges affecting his home village in the Brazilian north-east. However, his comments showed that some tensions and dilemmas may arise from the range and juxtaposition of different potential audiences for his local content, from local to non-local and even potentially global.

All three content creators discussed in this thesis thus attempt to combat the negative visibility of favelas with a differential, more nuanced (and sometimes, but not always, outright positive) visibility, seeking to make available broader and more diverse representations of favelas in general, and in particular, of the favela where they live. However, they also tell the stories that they believe need to be told, whilst prioritising the perspectives of local residents and angles rarely covered in the mainstream media. In this way, the three case studies presented in this thesis have shown how individual local content creators are using the internet to address head-on the representational challenges, and crisis, associated with favelas in Rio de Janeiro. The local content they produce counters the widespread homogenisation of favelas with a more complex and subtle narrative which emphasises the specificity of these neighbourhoods, at the same time as it points to common challenges and perspectives that may connect them and their residents. It also shows that favelas are sites of creativity and voice. As I have argued, therefore, user-generated local content about favelas provides a (re)mapping of urban space from the margins, drawing on what Appadurai (2002: 43) has called the 'work of the imagination'. Local content is not just a medium for the representation of place but also a technique for the production of locality by favela residents, an area of practice in which they can imagine, express and shape the literal and symbolic meanings of their neighbourhood, as physical place and place in the imaginary of the city.

As my analysis has revealed, the local content I have investigated goes beyond the recurrent dispute, identified by Licia Valladares in an interview with Carla Rodrigues, between 'the favela as a battleground and the favela as a site of the affirmation of the positivity of the favela' (Rodrigues 2010: n.p.). This idea of a dichotomy, of two main poles of content about favelas, can be mapped loosely (bearing in mind there will always be exceptions) onto the mainstream media, on the one hand, and websites run by NGOs which aim to challenge stereotypes about favelas even if they do not always present an explicitly positive view of these areas. As I have shown in the three empirical chapters of this thesis, the work of individual content creators also engages with this dispute and shares with NGO projects a central concern with '[t]he question of representation' (Gomes da Cunha 2008: 189). Like those projects, individual content creators have specific motivations for producing and publishing content about the favela on the internet, and the tone and scope of existing media coverage is one of the most compelling, whether because it is considered shallow, because it criminalises and stigmatises favelas, or because it is perceived as absent or disinterested and its coverage as unrepresentative. However, unlike projects, dispersed and distributed local content produced by individuals does not carry the same burden of representativity as projects, even as it makes a contribution to collective representations of a particular favela, and favelas in the aggregate.

However, this attention to media coverage in local content does not by any means imply that the content produced by favela residents is necessarily an alternative form of journalism. Whilst dominant media representations remain a powerful reference, present in the work of content creators inasmuch as they attempt to deny, qualify or work against these, local content produced by favela residents is varied and takes many shapes. This can be seen in the case studies presented in this thesis, which have focused on a selection of content originating in a single favela complex. The examples included here, incorporating text, photography, and video, included local content as citizens' media, local content as creative and literary writing (and its promotion), local content as place-based activism, local content as curation of local historical material and more. I found local content on the blog discussed in chapter 6 which was more explicitly constructed with this kind of content in mind, even if the nature of its locality varied and shifted over time and in response to events, but I also found local content in the single text discussed in chapter 4, which was originally published on a group blog without a geographical focus, and in the framing content of a literary blog and associated self-publishing activities, covered in chapter 5.

Whilst local content produced by favela residents may indeed sometimes more directly attempt to fill perceived gaps or respond to biases in media coverage, by providing their own reporting on a particular story, this is far from constituting a dominant trend. Violence itself, such a strong theme of externally-generated representations, is also sometimes present in favela residents' own content, but is only part of the story they tell on the internet about life in the favela. Nonetheless, there are times when it comes to the forefront, reflecting the disruption and suffering which can be caused by violent episodes in the favela, whether these are caused by conflicts between drug traffickers, or by police operations.

Although I have sought throughout the thesis to make a distinction between 'projects' and my focus on more independent content creation, the careful development and framing of content sites over time by individuals and their investment in the promotion and circulation of their content suggests that such work can also be considered a project of sorts, albeit a non-institutional one. This is certainly the case for the blog discussed in chapter 6. The development of an internet presence and the publication of internet content brings with it visibility which can be leveraged as a foundation for other activities, and this is illustrated in the writing competition and resulting publications discussed in chapter 5. In turn, it may also be that, with the increased use of web 2.0 platforms and approaches by institutional projects and their encouragement of contributions from a wider range of participants than before, as in the case of Viva Favela (now known as Viva Favela 2.0), the dividing lines between institutional and personal projects are now less clear-cut.

My account of the sophisticated adaptation and appropriation of blogs by the content creators whose work is discussed in this thesis, as well as their development of communicative circuits for the dissemination of their content, using different internet platforms and print media, shows the dynamic and multi-faceted nature of Brazilian digital culture – and specifically of '*cultura popular digital*' – at the same time as it provides empirical data on a previously overlooked aspect of that digital culture. In this way, the thesis contributes to the fields of internet studies and Latin American studies, in its consideration of local content creation on the internet by individuals, and of representations of favelas and the city produced by their residents in opposition to those which are currently dominant in Brazil and beyond, showing how the internet is an important site for representational practices.

There are however limits to the conclusions I can draw about the 'impact' of local content creation by favela residents, even if this aspect goes beyond the goals of the research in any

case. I approached local content from the point of view of its creators, and did not investigate the reception of their content. Although some insights into the reach and visibility of the content, and the responses and connections it provoked, emerged from the accounts of content creators, and from my analysis of different content events involving specific pieces or clusters of content, analysis of the scale and effect of the reception of the content discussed here remains largely beyond the scope of my project. My focus was also limited to the work of three content creators from a single favela. In addressing the question of reception and impact in my conclusions, however, I can note that despite the growth in internet access in Brazil as a whole, and in urban areas in particular, the statistics still evidence striking inequalities between social groups. In chapter 3, I discussed CETIC.br data from its survey carried out 2009 showing that nationally, 42% of C class Brazilians and only 14% of D and E class Brazilians accessed the internet in the three months prior to the survey, compared to 72% in B class and 85% in A class (CETIC.br 2010d). As I pointed out in chapter 1, beyond the need for reliable access to a fast internet connection, content creation also demands a significant amount of time and requires specific competencies and literacies, both technological and otherwise. It is therefore a relatively small number of favela residents who are engaged in the type of activities I have investigated, although this may be on the rise. However, it is worth remembering the high levels of social network site (and particularly Orkut) use by Brazilians in all social classes which was mentioned in chapter 3, as well as Barros' (2008) observation that the users of the *lan house* where she carried out her research, in a Rio favela, were engaged in producing a textual and visual record of everyday local life through their use of Orkut, fotologs and blogs. This too is local content, albeit perhaps more vernacular and less translocally visible than the sort I have considered in my own research.

Whilst some favela residents and their cultural expressions have achieved greater visibility in recent years, occupying space as 'new subjects of discourse' (Bentes 2007a: 55) as I showed in chapter 3, and the increased internet access among favela residents has certainly led to the availability of more diverse user-generated representations of these areas, some aspects of the contemporary sociopolitical context affecting favelas and their representation point to significant challenges ahead. In 2014 Rio de Janeiro will be one of the host cities for the FIFA World Cup in Brazil, and just two years later, in 2016, it will host the Olympic Games. The city has thus already begun to attract an intensified level of global visibility and scrutiny, which has consequences for favelas and potentially favours the viewpoint among some local elites that favelas represent a threat to the progress and forward-looking

development of the city. The visibility associated with international sporting mega-events also prepares the way for increased propagation of both negative and positive stereotypes about favelas, the city of Rio and Brazil as a whole. The UPP scheme to occupy and pacify certain favelas in Rio is one aspect of the preparation for these international sporting events which is already underway. Some forced evictions of favela residents and the destruction of their homes have also begun, or been threatened, near the sites of future sporting venues, or along the routes of proposed upgrades to public transport, but there has also been significant protest and coverage of these both in content produced and aggregated by NGOs and social movements (for example, Sá 2011), as well as the international media (Al Jazeera 2011; Green 2011; Lustig 2011; Phillips 2011; The Telegraph 2011). As well as potentially prompting the establishment of new local content projects in Rio, whether promoted by the state as part of funded activities associated with the social 'impact' and legacy of these sporting mega-events or by civil society organisations as a means of monitoring and diversifying coverage of these events, the World Cup and Olympics are also likely to spark the attention of individual content creators such as those whose work has been covered in this thesis.

However, this thesis has not only been about favelas and their representation. Conceptually, the thesis has further developed and updated Ballantyne's (2002) definition of local content in response to the emergence of web 2.0 and the resulting growth in user-generated local content, as well as shifts in how locality is understood which respond to increased use of digital technologies as part of broader social, cultural and economic changes of recent decades. I have looked in detail at the meaning and significance of the 'local' in the context of the internet and digital culture. As I have shown, local content now often constitutes an individual, rather than community, expression and one which reflects the multiple and overlapping empirical contexts of locality which individuals produce and engage with in their everyday lives, both place-based and non place-based. The empirical insights provided by my research show how a local content approach, which is both conceptual and methodological, has shed new light on internet practices and representations of the local within a specific context, in this case a Brazilian favela. By linking an overview of mainstream representations of favelas with a discussion of those produced by individual residents on the internet, I have illustrated the struggles which can be involved in both the representation of place and the production of locality, which were highlighted by Massey (1994: 153) and Appadurai (1996: 189).

In theoretical terms, the thesis has also linked networked theories of place and locality to a reframed understanding of territorial embeddedness. Chapter 1 included an exploration of how place has been approached in internet studies, from early claims about its potential for deterritorialisation to more recent work, demonstrating the ongoing importance of place in people's use of the internet, and particularly in content creation. My thesis is a further addition to this literature. I have used the concept of territorial embeddedness to examine how individuals represent and express their relationship to place in internet content, and my approach thus combines detailed analysis of content with attention to the specific practices by which content creators 'anchor' their content in place, such as choice of language and style, inclusion of visual resources, choice of dissemination channels and targeting of particular audiences. In the case study presented in chapter 4, I also looked specifically at how the embeddedness and locality of content can be affected by its reposting and wide dissemination – an area which I believe merits further research.

Overall, this ethnographically-inspired research has positioned itself at the intersection of internet studies and Latin American studies, incorporating both social sciences and literary and cultural approaches. It has been truly interdisciplinary and has brought together literature and approaches from different branches of anthropology and from new literacy studies, fields which provided the inspiration for the main methodological concepts employed in the thesis: the content event and a communicative ecology approach to local content, which considered blogs as part of a broader communicative circuit involving a range of internet platforms, but also 'offline' communication channels and activities. Throughout the research process, I was reflexive about methodology and ethics and I constructed and implemented a nuanced, hybrid and sensitive approach to informed consent and ongoing consultation with research participants, which reflected specific challenges associated with my focus on internet content produced by ordinary people from a marginalised urban area with the aim of increasing their visibility, detailed in chapter 2. At the heart of this thesis has been a mode of research engagement with user-generated content circulating on the internet and in other media I have called 'following the content', which built on the experiences of other researchers and responded to the characteristics of my own networked field site. I followed local content produced by Brazilian favela residents as both text and practice as it circulated, not always in its original form, between contexts of locality and between online and offline sites of publication and dissemination, and my methodological, digital, physical and analytical mobility was ultimately a response to the mobility of local content, and of its creators.

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Appendix: URLs

This appendix provides the URLs for favela-related web projects and other relevant organisations and initiatives mentioned in chapter 3.

Favela-related websites, in alphabetical order

Afroreggae - www.afroreggae.org
Agência de Notícias das Favelas (ANF) - www.anf.org.br
Agência Redes para a Juventude - www.agenciarj.org
Central Única das Favelas (CUFA) - www.cufa.org.br
Correspondentes da Paz - www.correspondentesdapaz.com.br
ESPOCC - Escola Popular de Comunicação Crítica - www.espocc.org.br
FavelaDaRocinha.Com - faveladarocinha.com/joomla/
Favela é isso aí - www.favelaeissoai.com.br
Favela.info - favela.info/
Favela Livre - oglobo.globo.com/blogs/favelalivre/
Rio On Watch - rioonwatch.org/
Imagens do Povo - www.imagensdopovo.org.br/
Observatório de Favelas Notícias e Análises -
www.observatoriodefavelas.org.br/observatoriodefavelas/noticias/
Olhares do Morro - olharesdomorro.org
Parceiro do RJ - g1.globo.com/platb/rio-de-janeiro-parceiro-do-rj/
Portal Comunitário da Cidade de Deus - www.cidadededeus.org.br
Projeto Morrinho - www.morrinho.com
Rede Jovem - www.redejovem.org.br/
Rocinha.Org - rocinha.org/
Viva Favela - www.vivafavela.com.br
Voz das Comunidades - www.vozdascomunidades.com.br/
Wikimapa - www.wikimapa.org.br

Other organisations and initiatives mentioned in chapter 3, also in alphabetical order

Associação Brasileira de Centros de Inclusão Digital - www.abcid.org.br/
Campanha Banda Larga - campanhabandalarga.org.br/
Campus Party Brasil - www.campus-party.com.br
CDI-Lan - cdilan.com.br/
CGI.br - cgi.br/
CETIC.br - cetic.br/
IBGE - www.ibge.gov.br/
Observatório Nacional de Inclusão Digital - www.onid.org.br
Overmundo - www.overmundo.com.br
Sebrae - www.sebrae.com.br