— CONTENTIOUS POLITICS OF SLUMS:

Understanding Different Outcomes of Community Resistance against Evictions in Rio de Janeiro

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Abstract

Between 2010 and 2016, over 65,000 slum dwellers were forcibly evicted in Rio de Janeiro. This article compares three cases of anti-eviction resistance over this period. While the three case study communities were all relatively successful in contesting evictions, the outcomes (material, social, political-symbolic) of their mobilizations were different. To understand how and why, we examine and compare the structures and processes of mobilization in these three communities and show how they found different openings and limitations in the changing political opportunity structure. We distinguish three distinct 'moments' or opportunity structures in Rio de Janeiro's urban governance between 2010 and 2016. We term these the City of Exception, the City in Revolt and the City in Crisis. The analytical and theoretical framework of contentious politics helps us draw together and expand on two dominant narratives in scholars' approach to slum evictions: on the one hand a top-down perspective of the 'city against slum dwellers'; on the other a bottom-up perspective of 'slum dwellers against the city'. In this article we test the usefulness of our expanded framework—contentious politics of slums—for understanding the organization and outcomes of community resistance against evictions, and discuss its relevance for research on the politics of slums in the global South.

Introduction

In today's urban age, the majority of the world's population resides in cities. Rapid urbanization has been accompanied by shortages of adequate housing, deepening economic inequality and increasing sociospatial segregation, particularly in the global South (Sheppard *et al*., 2015; Dupont *et al*., 2016). According to UN-Habitat (2016), 30% of the urban population in developing countries live in slums.[1] These areas are often characterized by inadequate public services, low structural quality of housing, insecure tenure and high levels of poverty and insecurity. Such urban inequalities produce political contentions and 'politics of slums', which are centred on the encounter between efforts from above directed at these areas and efforts from residents to secure housing and improve living conditions. Constructing more knowledge about these encounters is high on both political and academic agendas (Dupont *et al*., 2016).

A prominent source of conflict in the politics of slums is the clearance of such areas in the context of 'global-city' and/or mega-event-driven urban development (UN-Habitat, 2003; Davis, 2006; Dupont, 2011; Roy, 2011, Zérah *et al*., 2011; Landy and Saglio-Yatzimirsky, 2014). In this article we compare the organization and outcomes of community resistance against disputed public interventions and evictions in three favelas (slums) in Rio de Janeiro in the years preceding the 2016 Summer Olympics, with the aim of adding new knowledge to the encounters between slum dwellers' movements

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1   The term 'slum' refers to neighbourhoods of poor-quality housing and should not be used, as it often is, as a derogatory term to label the people living there (Gilbert, 2007). In Brazil, the term 'favela' (slum) is commonly used by these areas' own residents. The struggle over the symbolic and evaluative meaning of the word 'favela' is in itself part of the 'politics of slums'.

and mega-event-driven developments and in this way contribute to the research agenda on politics of slums in the fast-urbanizing global South.

Rio de Janeiro's favelas have had an ambiguous place in the city ever since they were established in the late 1800s. As they compensated for inadequate housing policies and provided cheap accommodation for the city's labour force reserve, their existence has to some extent been tolerated. According to the latest census, 22% of Rio de Janeiro's population reside in one of the city's approximately 1,000 favelas (IBGE, 2011). However, the high levels of poverty, crime and informality in these areas—a result of public policies characterized by neglect—have turned them into a headache for the city's elites (Valladares, 2005; Vainer, 2011b). Therefore, the abolition of slums, either through evictions or by upgrading them (*urbanização*), has long been high on the political agenda. In the 1960s and 1970s, tens of thousands of favela residents were displaced from central Rio de Janeiro to new low-cost housing units in the peripheries. In the 1980s and 1990s, struggles for democracy and social reforms resulted in significant legal improvements and affirmed the principle of non-eviction.[2] In the 2000s, the official policy in Brazil was in situ upgrading of slums, in line with international conventions for social and economic human rights. This was recognized through the federal Growth Acceleration Program's large-scale urban renewal initiatives towards favelas (PAC Favelas) and the municipal Morar Carioca favela upgrading programme. However, in seeming contradiction to this, a new round of mass favela evictions was initiated in Rio de Janeiro in 2010, during which over 65,000 people were displaced over a period of six years (Faulhaber and Azevedo, 2015).

In this article we present and discuss the city's plans of, and residents' resistance to, evictions in three selected favelas: Laboriaux, Morro da Providência and Vila Autódromo. While residents in all three case study areas were relatively successful in contesting evictions, the outcomes of this resistance (material, social, political-symbolic forms and/or degrees of 'success') varied substantially, which calls for qualitative comparative analysis. The principal question guiding the research presented in this article is: What characterizes and explains the similarities and differences in the communities' resistance to evictions, and how and why do they differ in terms of their outcomes?

To address this question, we draw on and expand two overarching narratives that have guided scholarly work on the politics of slums: on the one hand a top-down perspective of the 'city against slum dwellers', and on the other a bottom-up approach of the 'slum dwellers against the city'. We identify certain weaknesses and blind spots in these perspectives and draw on the analytical-theoretical strand of contentious politics to suggest they should be combined in a relational framework of contentious politics of slums (McAdam *et al.*, 2001; Tarrow and Tilly, 2015). In the section that follows we present the underpinnings of our framework before applying it in the analysis to examine and compare the contentious politics of slum evictions and resistance in the three case study communities. In the concluding sections we discuss our findings and their analytical/theoretical implications for research on the politics of slums in the global South.

Theoretical and analytical framework

In the academic literature that examines the politics of slums internationally and in Brazil, a bifurcation can be identified between a perspective of the 'city against slum dwellers', which focuses on how city authorities address slums through aggressive

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2   As a result of joint lobbying efforts of favela-based associations and a variety of social movements and activists, Rio de Janeiro's 1990 Organic Law (the city's constitution) prohibits evictions except in the case of physical risk because of land conditions. This principle of non-eviction was reaffirmed in Rio de Janeiro's 1992 Master Plan. Furthermore, the right to housing was included in the 2001 City Statute, a federal law that consolidated and expanded the provisions for urban reform outlined in the 1988 Constitution and provides guidelines and tools for their implementation.

urban policies, and that of 'slum dwellers against the city', which foregrounds how residents mobilize against and engage with the formulation and implementation of such policies.

The 'city against slum dwellers' approach seeks to understand the political and economic drivers for demolishing, upgrading and/or relocating slum areas. It plots collective action-from-above and its structural basis to expose dominant coalitions of economic and political elites in the city and beyond. A key tenet is that, in the current era of neoliberal globalization, cities and the local state have been 'entrepreneurialized' (Harvey, 1989). New public management approaches have led to the state being reconceived of as a facilitative rather than a regulatory apparatus. Furthermore, cities have begun behaving like businesses (Vainer, 2011b) to attract and support capital to become 'global cities' (Sassen, 1991; Moulaert *et al.*, 2003). This drive towards global competitiveness, which involves image-building, is often accompanied by efforts to 'cleanse' the city of slums and other allegedly undesirable elements (Dupont, 2011).

In its striving to become a 'global' city, Rio de Janeiro has embraced urban entrepreneurialism and the hosting of sports mega-events as a central branding initiative (Mascarenhas, 2012; Sánchez and Broudehoux, 2013; Broudehoux, 2017). The city bid successfully on the 2007 Pan American Games, the 2014 FIFA World Cup and the 2016 Olympics. As the city prepared for these events, the local government made ad hoc decisions and agreed to demands from private sponsors and organizing committees instead of developing or adhering to plans that had already been approved (such as Rio de Janeiro's 1992 Master Plan). Inspired by the theories of Poulantzas (1977) and Agamben (2005) about the state of exception, Vainer (2011a) defined Rio de Janeiro as a 'City of Exception' that was circumventing norms of democratic governance and frameworks of citizen/human rights in the name of the necessity of the events (see also Sánchez and Broudehoux, 2013; Vainer, 2011b). A series of initiatives were introduced to control 'deviant' populations; these included new 'anti-terror' legislation, harsher penalties for those participating in social protests, and militarized police presence in favelas. Many favelas were also earmarked for extensive upgrading and/or evictions, which were denounced by scholars and residents as beautifying projects (Freeman, 2014; Broudehoux, 2017).

In contrast to this 'from-above' perspective on how the development of entrepreneurial 'Cities of Exception' repressed social protests and led to massive depoliticization, scholars of the 'slum dwellers against the city' approach are more actor- and action-from-below oriented. They explore residents' day-to-day resistance against the limitations imposed on poor people's citizenship and rights, and foreground marginalized urban spaces as sites of political agency that question and challenge the neoliberal order (Miraftab and Wills, 2005; Dikeç, 2007; Swyngedouw, 2009; Roy, 2011).

Holston (2009) argues that in Brazil, the working class and the urban periphery are engaged in a struggle to establish a city with a different order of citizenship that recognizes universal inclusion and substantive rights such as housing, education and basic health care. His conceptualization of a bottom-up 'insurgent citizenship' views citizenship politics as emerging from the periphery itself, enunciating demands that have the potential to change society around it. Other scholars use a similar bottom-up perspective on urban politics, albeit with a clearer reference to specific contexts and relationships between actors. Cavalcanti (2004) engages with theoretical strands that emphasize the agency of political actors situated in structurally and culturally 'marginal' contexts, contending that favela residents' struggles against evictions and for the 'right to have rights' have politicized favelas by constituting their residents as political subjects on a daily level (see also Burgos, 1998). Meanwhile, Motta (2019) shows how favela residents challenge the stigmatizing quantifications of favelas in public statistics by producing their own numbers, thus disputing the realities that are being counted or that count. Scholars who focus on citizenship 'from below' connect it with demands for the

'right to the city', which entails a collective right to access the opportunities a city has to offer and to participate in the shaping and reshaping of all aspects of the city itself (Lefebre, 1968; Mitchell, 2003; Harvey, 2008; 2012).

These two perspectives offer valuable insights into the politics of slums, but share a certain imbalance. Scholars using the 'city against slum dwellers' approach tend to be deterministic and present a generic view of the governing forces without due attention to the specific constellations of these forces in particular political-spatial contexts and, hence, the internal contradictions and vulnerabilities of such constellations. By contrast, scholars using the 'slum dwellers against the city' approach might be at risk of romanticizing an inherent political potential located in urban peripheries. Both perspectives downplay the mediating level of politics where, first of all, the relationship between the city and citizens are structured and are played out in contexts of conflicts and protests; second, democratic and legal principles are observed to varying degrees, and third, power relations can be shifted under certain circumstances. We therefore argue for drawing together and expanding on these two approaches by building on insights from the analytical-theoretical framework of contentious politics.
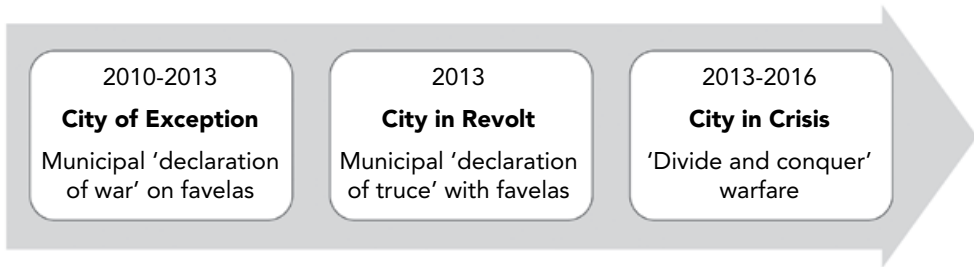
Towards a combined and enhanced framework: contentious politics of slums

The contentious politics framework was developed from research on social movements but has been extended to include a wider range of conflictual phenomena (Tarrow, 2015). Contentious politics shifts the focus from the subjects and objects of contention to the mechanisms that connect them to each other and to broader institutions and actors (McAdam *et al.*, 2001; 2008). It has a distinctively interactive approach, placing the analytical focus on the dynamics of contention between makers of claims, their objects and the third parties involved in the contentions. It further situates what collective political actors do within the broader episodes of contention of which they are a part and strives towards contextualized understandings of how individuals and groups come to engage in contentious politics. A key dimension is to understand how actors—in this article collective actors situated in slums—act upon changing political opportunity structures, understood as features of regimes and institutions that facilitate or inhibit a political actor's collective action (McAdam *et al.*, 1996; Meyer and Staggenborg, 1996). It thus advocates studying how actors perceive, shape and act upon structurally based opportunities, rather than seeing opportunities for activism as structurally given (McAdam *et al.*, 2001).

In the analysis that follows, we distinguish between three distinct 'moments' or political opportunity structures in the period we focus on in this article—2010 to 2016. These are termed the City of Exception, the City in Revolt and the City in Crisis (see Figure 1). The City of Exception refers to the unique political conjuncture in 2010, when the City's preparations for sports mega-events and a large natural disaster opened up opportunities for a heightened 'exceptional' mode of governance and led to threats of evictions against favela residents. We argue that the City of Exception was first contradicted[3] by what we call the City in Revolt, when countrywide mass demonstrations in June 2013 opened up certain possibilities for renegotiating evictions. The City in Revolt was subsequently overshadowed by what we call the City in Crisis, which was the result of the ever-deepening political and economic crises enveloping the country from late 2013 and the mega-events drawing closer.

While political opportunity structures are central to our analysis, they did not determine the outcomes of the contentions over evictions. Residents in the three case study areas found different openings and limitations within their structural contexts. Our

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3   In other words, the City of Exception continued to be a defining feature of Rio de Janeiro, although a set of opportunities for revolt emerged.

2010-2013	2013	2013-2016
City of Exception	**City in Revolt**	**City in Crisis**
Municipal 'declaration of war' on favelas	Municipal 'declaration of truce' with favelas	'Divide and conquer' warfare

FIGURE 1 Evolving political opportunity structures in Rio de Janeiro, 2010–2016 (graphic produced by the authors)

analytical focus in this article is therefore on the dynamics of contention between favela actors and external forces—primarily public authorities, but also civil society actors—in the context of changing political spaces for confrontations and negotiations. We argue that changes in the types of spaces in which interactions took place—between the 'invented' spaces (Miraftab, 2004), where favela residents developed innovative approaches to create their own opportunities and terms of engagement, and the 'invited' spaces (Cornwall, 2002), where public authorities invited residents to participate—indicate changes in the relationships among the actors involved in the contentions (due to alterations to strategies and resources and/or changes in the wider societal and political environment). These are key turning points in an evolving process.

Empirical sources and methodology

This article is based on ethnographic fieldwork in Rio de Janeiro and the three case study communities from 2011 until 2016. In addition to direct/indirect field-ethnographic methods, we draw on findings from document and policy analysis, content analysis of different media channels and semi-structured interviews. We conducted approximately ten in-depth interviews with residents and activists in each community. In addition, we interviewed activists in citywide social movements, politicians in both government and the opposition, as well as technicians, academics and journalists who were involved in the processes of (contesting) evictions in different ways.[4] Data triangulation was applied.

In our analyses of the three cases of anti-eviction resistance, we adhered to the principle of process tracing in accordance with a mechanism- and process-based qualitative approach (McAdam *et al.*, 2001; Mayntz, 2004; George and Bennet, 2005). Process tracing goes beyond identifying correlations between independent variables and outcomes to unpack the causal relationship that connects them in each case (George and Bennet, 2005; Gerring, 2007; McAdam *et al.*, 2009). This way, commonalities and particularities of the cases may be revealed through qualitative comparative research (Ragin, 2014) and relational comparison (Hart, 2016). Rather than defining and exploring the case communities as expressions of assumed universal processes, we see them as 'vantage points from which to try to begin to grasp the coming together and interconnections of … key processes and practices' (*ibid.*: 19).

In this article we now turn to the contentions over the evictions in the three study case areas of Laboriaux, Morro da Providência and Vila Autódromo (see Figure 2). We start by presenting the City government's launching of threats of evictions under the City of Exception and by introducing the three case communities. Subsequently, we discuss how the communities mobilized anti-eviction resistance, and compare how they responded to similar political opportunity structures in the three 'cities' (see Figure 1).

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4   See Braathen *et al.* (2013) for a more detailed presentation of how data was collected and triangulated.
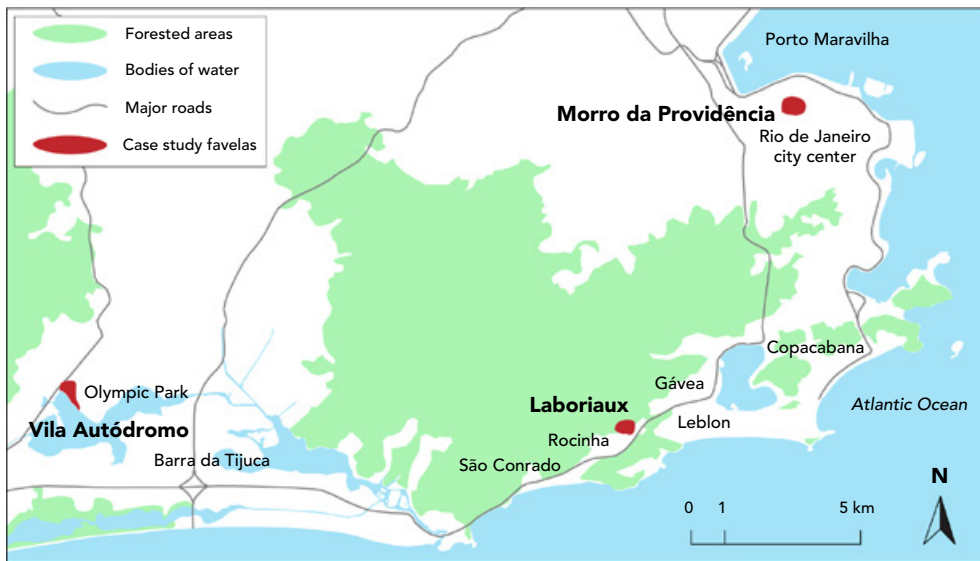
FIGURE 2   Map indicating the location of the three case study communities (map produced by the authors)

We analyse their ability to mobilize both within the community and external networks of support, to what extent and how they were constrained by their different locations in the urban geography and finally, how their locations determined the 'value' the government attributed to them in the bargaining processes.

City of Exception

On 5 April 2010, a natural disaster struck Rio de Janeiro. Heavy torrential rains and a series of devastating landslides killed close to 300 people and left hundreds more homeless, the majority of whom lived in precarious favela settlements. The municipality swiftly declared a state of emergency in the city, and announced a comprehensive and apparently benevolent strategy directed towards favelas to prevent future disasters. It combined three approaches: a weather forecast and evacuation system (Alerta Rio) to monitor vulnerable settlements; plans for in situ upgrading to prevent future flooding and landslides;[5] and eviction of residents in high-risk areas. In other words, the municipality pledged to upgrade where possible, and to remove where necessary. In practice, however, the seemingly apolitical, technical argument for evictions to counter environmental risk would become a 'free card' to legitimize evictions on a much larger scale.

– The City of Rio de Janeiro against slum dwellers: 'declaration of war' on favelas

As stated earlier, Rio de Janeiro's preparations for the 2014 FIFA World Cup and the 2016 Olympics had unleashed a series of interventions directed at favelas. Rio de Janeiro's Strategic Plan (2009–2012), developed as part of the city's entrepreneurial strategy, stated as an explicit goal to reduce the physical space occupied by favelas by 5% by 2016, compared to 2008.[6] Evictions and/or in situ upgrading of favelas were on the

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5   In situ upgrading was promised most notably through the municipal Morar Carioca programme, which proclaimed the upgrading and social and spatial integration of all favelas into the formal city by the year 2020, and the federal Growth Acceleration Program (PAC), which focused on infrastructure development and social housing in some favelas.

6   See the 'Plano Estratégico Da Prefeitura do Rio de Janeiro 2009-2012 [Strategic Plan for Rio de Janeiro 2009-012]'. [WWW Document]. URL http://www.rio.rj.gov.br/dlstatic/10112/2116763/243779/planejamento_estrategico_site.pdf (accessed 10 February 2020).

public agenda, and in January 2010 the municipality had declared its intent to remove 119 favelas and up to 200,000 people.[7] The natural disaster of April 2010 gave additional ammunition to the city for executing this plan under the pretext of environmental risk. As Faulhaber and Azevedo (2015) show, the favelas that were targeted for evictions were overwhelmingly located in central areas or close to sports arenas that would be used for the mega-events, while replacement housing was located in the city's distant peripheries. Thus, it seems that these interventions were motivated more by the City's urban branding ambitions than by concerns for the slum dwellers. From this perspective, the declaration of a state of emergency was a declaration of 'war' on favelas in the form of eviction plans the city had not seen the like of since the era of military dictatorship.

FAVELA 1: LABORIAUX

Labouriaux is an isolated sub-neighbourhood of Rocinha, Rio de Janeiro's largest favela. It borders on the Tijuca Forest and is situated directly above the upper-middle-class neighbourhood of Alto Gávea. Laboriaux's history can be traced back to the early 1980s, when the municipality had to remove several families from the lower part of Rocinha when a sewerage trench was constructed. The City wanted to displace these families to housing estates in the easternmost areas of the city, but residents protested and suggested relocation along an unpopulated trail into the Tijuca Forest. The City agreed to this, and in 1982 it constructed 75 houses that would develop into the community of Laboriaux. A residents' association was founded the same year. As the years passed, the community grew to around 900 families, or 3,000 people. Its population is relatively homogeneous in terms of income, and a high percentage of residents own the homes in which they live (Burgos, 2016).

On 5 April 2010, heavy rains in Rio de Janeiro led to landslides in Laboriaux that caused damage to approximately 150 houses. A technical assessment conducted by the Municipal Geotechnical Institute Foundation (GEO-Rio) in the days after the landslide, concluded that 'the sum of [several] unfavorable conditions … justify the eviction of all of the households at risk' (GEO-Rio, 2010). While it is argued in the report that 'households at risk' should be targeted for eviction, Mayor Eduardo Paes announced on 7 April that *all* residents were to be evicted immediately.[8] Just a week after the tragic landslide, the Municipal Civil Defence entered Labouriaux and marked all houses and businesses with a number as part of a claimed mapping of dwellings located in at-risk areas that needed to be demolished. The Civil Defence also went door to door in an effort to persuade residents to sign notices of condemnation. With the notices signed, the municipality could later negotiate resettlements or reimbursements. Residents we interviewed denounced the process as violent and chaotic, as one resident recounts:

> The municipality arrived and marked everything, intimidating people, asking everybody to sign the notice of condemnation in order to be registered for the social rent programme. They said that if you did not sign, you would be in a totally vulnerable position, without a home, without anything. There was a lot of psychological pressure.[9]

While residents agreed that some (of the more recently constructed) housing in the community was situated in at-risk zones, they disputed the arguments on which

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7   See 'Prefeitura do Rio irá remover 119 favelas de áreas de risco' [Rio municipality to remove 119 favelas in at-risk areas]. *Terra* 10 January 2013 [WWW Document]. URL http://noticias.terra.com.br/brasil/cidades/prefeitura-do-rio-ira-remover-119-favelas-de-areas-de-risco,3d78a21a4572b310VgnCLD200000bbcceb0aRCRD.html (accessed 10 February 2020).

8   See 'Eduardo Paes anuncia remoção de moradores e reacende polêmica' [Eduardo Paes announces evictions and reignites polemic] [WWW document]. URL http://veja.abril.com.br/blog/reinaldo/eduardo-paes-anuncia-remocao-de-moradores-e-reacende-polemica/ (accessed 10 February 2020).

9   Interview with female resident, age 28, November 2016.

the complete eviction of Labouriaux was based. The area had been deemed suitable for housing when the municipality constructed the initial houses in 1982. Residents therefore believed that the City's endeavour to remove Laboriaux had less to do with the objective condition of risk in Laboriaux, and more to do with a larger political strategy of 'thinning out' favelas located on valuable urban land (Freeman and Burgos, 2017).

FAVELA 2: MORRO DA PROVIDÊNCIA

Morro da Providência was the first settlement to be called a 'favela' in Brazil. Its history dates back to 1893 (Valladares, 2005) and it is located on a hillside close to the old port area, in the historical downtown area of the city. According to Brazil's 2010 census it had a population of 3,777, of which 28% were categorized as extremely poor (living in households with an income less than half the minimum wage). Morro da Providência's residents' association dates back to 1968, when a landslide killing 58 people led to residents mobilizing in support of the victims through collective efforts.

Ever since the 1968 landslide, public authorities have considered most of Morro da Providência an area of environmental risk. Although Providência was not directly affected by landslides during the April 2010 disaster, it was included as an area in need of intervention. If we wish to understand why, it is important to consider the community's location. A year earlier, an urban renewal programme called Porto Maravilha (Marvellous Port) had been launched to renovate the old port region below Providência. The programme, based on a public–private partnership, had a mandate to convert the port area into an upmarket waterfront recreation area with a media centre for the 2016 Olympics. Providência needed to be either upgraded (and/or gentrified) or removed to achieve these plans. For this reason, the community was included in the 2010 Morar Carioca cross-city programme to renovate the favelas. This programme, through which the City pledged large-scale improvement to urban infrastructure and services, was to include the targeted residents in the decision-making process.[10]

Despite the City's promises that the much-needed interventions would be planned in conjunction with the community, residents soon became disillusioned with Morar Carioca. The programme was presented to the community as a fait accompli in January 2011 without any prior consultation or any attempts at a participatory process. As one resident explained:

> They arrived here with the project … and gathered people in the square, showed a presentation that you could not see because it was so bright. Representatives of the construction companies were present. They were already communicating to us what would be done.[11]

Furthermore, residents learned that the ambitious promises of in situ upgrading came at a huge cost: mass evictions. The city planned to build a cable car that would connect the port area with the central train station, via a stop in Providência. In addition, a funicular was to be built along an historical staircase. These new structures would be built on and take up the main public spaces in the favela, and dozens of houses would have to be demolished. Residents accused the developers of the projects of catering to the mobility needs of tourists rather than that of residents. Criticism escalated when hundreds of additional houses were suddenly numbered in a similar way to those in Laboriaux. The municipality painted a number on nearly half of the homes in the favela—832 houses. These were to be demolished—representing another apparent favela-thinning strategy (see also Freeman, 2014).

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10   Interview with Jorge Bittar, Municipal Secretary of Housing for Rio de Janeiro City, 29 August 2012.
11   Interview with male resident, age 40, May 2012.

FAVELA 3: VILA AUTÓDROMO

Vila Autódromo is situated by the beautiful Lake Jacarépagua in the western zone of Rio de Janeiro. It used to be a fishing village, but from 1967 onwards it was transformed into a neighbourhood for workers constructing a Formula 1 racetrack (*autódromo*) and the adjacent upper-middle-class boomtown of Barra da Tijuca. The land where Vila Autódromo is located belongs to the state of Rio de Janeiro. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, 354 households received land tenure[12] from the state, and Vila Autódromo became legally recognized as a 'formal' settlement (Vale and Gray, 2013). In 2005, the city declared part of the community a Special Area of Social Interest (AEIS),[13] which is meant to provide legal assurance against evictions (AMPVA, 2012: 8). According to the 2010 census (IBGE, 2011) it had 1,252 residents, of whom most considered the house they lived in their own, and only 10.5% paid rent (Vainer *et al.*, 2016).

Owing to its location, Vila Autódromo has for a long time been under tremendous pressure from real-estate developers and the municipality. In spite of its recognition as an AEIS, several attempts to remove the community were made throughout the 1990s and 2000s. The Association of Residents and Fishermen of Vila Autódromo (AMPVA), established in 1987, successfully mobilized residents to resist these attempts, and the community remained (AMPVA, 2012). However, when it was announced in 2009 that the 2016 Olympic Park was to be constructed adjacent to Vila Autódromo, the community was once again being threatened with collective forced eviction.

Municipal Housing Secretary Jorge Bittar visited Vila Autódromo in September 2011 to notify residents that they would be evicted. His only explanation was that 'this is a commitment from the federal government to the International Olympic Committee'.[14] However, the residents' association obtained information that the real reason was more private, local and sinister: the mayor wanted the community to be relocated not because of the construction of the Olympic Park, but rather in exchange for favours from real-estate developers in the area. These were revealed to have donated US $150,000 to the political campaigns of Mayor Paes and Housing Secretary Bittar.[15] The consortium that won the contract to construct the Olympic Park (Rio Mais) had been promised that they could use 75% of the land to accommodate luxury gated communities, which they could sell or rent after the Olympic Games (Vainer *et al.*, 2016). Vila Autódromo would be an eyesore to its future neighbours.

–   The slum dwellers against the city: mobilizing resistance

The cases presented here show that the City employed similar strategies in all three communities in its attempts to carry out large-scale evictions (see Table 1). City employees went door to door to mark houses for eviction and to attempt to convince residents to sign notices of condemnation and sign up for replacement housing. The tenor of these visits was that if residents did not take advantage of the 'opportunity' presented them, they risked losing everything. While the law requires social workers to be present to inform residents of their rights, in many cases they were not (Comitê Popular, 2013). Some residents (voluntarily or through coercion) accepted the City's offers of either cash payments for their homes or replacement housing. Their houses were demolished soon after, and the rubble was left in place as part of the City's strategy to weaken residents' resistance. The debris conveyed a sense of devastation, as it led to a host of problems, such as puddles of rainwater in which rats and dengue mosquitos

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12   They received titles based on concessions for use of public land for 99 years.
13   Lei Complementar # 74/2005.
14   See 'Housing Secretary Jorge Bittar to present relocation proposal to Vila Autódromo Community Sunday', 14 October 2011 [WWW document]. URL http://hosted-p0.vresp.com/363276/e38ba016e2/ARCHIVE (accessed 10 February 2020).
15   See Agência Estado (2011), 'Rio paga R$19,9 mi por área de doador de Paes' [Rio pays R$19.9 million to Paes donor], *Estadão de São Paulo* 6 October [WWW document]. URL https://politica.estadao.com.br/noticias/geral,rio-paga-r-19-9-mi-por-area-de-doador-de-paes,782004 (accessed 10 February 2020).

TABLE 1   Three favelas targeted for evictions

	Laboriaux	**Morro da Providência**	**Vila Autódromo**
Population	900 households 3,000 people	1,523 households 4,889 people	450 households 1,252 people
Government's reason for evictions	Landslides and evictions in 'environmental risk' areas	Urban renewal initiatives in the Port region, Morar Carioca upgrades	Construction of Olympic Park

SOURCE: Authors' research

multiplied (Comitê Popular, 2013; Faulhaber and Azevedo, 2015). It also sent a strong message to the remaining residents that their eviction was imminent and inevitable.

The responses in all three communities were similar too. In all three, residents mobilized swiftly to initiate a series of initiatives to prevent evictions and organize resistance. When a demolition crew arrived in Laboriaux to tear down the community's recently upgraded school shortly after the landslides, residents reacted by occupying the building and physically hindering the demolition. According to a civil engineer who provided technical support to the favelas threatened with evictions:

> this was the most important moment of the resistance, which really prevented Laboriaux from being removed. If they had demolished the school, which was not at risk, it would have been a very large psychological shock to the community; they would probably have been demoralized and it would have been very difficult to resist.[16]

After this act of immediate and direct resistance, residents reactivated the residents' association that had lain dormant for some time. The association, together with other local leaders, formed a commission that reached out to sympathetic politicians, the Housing and Land Office of Rio State Public Defenders (NUTH), the catholic support network Pastoral das Favelas, and academics at the Pontifical Catholic University (PUC) and the Federal University (UFRJ). PUC professors and civil engineer Maurício Campos assisted Laboriaux residents in writing a technical report that contested the municipality's claim that the community was in an area of extreme risk (Campos, 2010). The City's constitution clearly states that favelas are not to be removed unless the land presents a physical risk to the citizens who live on it. Without a risk-based justification the City had no legal basis for arbitrary evictions.

In Morro da Providência, a residents' action committee was established immediately after houses were marked for eviction. An important difference between the three case study areas was the legitimacy of the residents' associations within the communities. Whereas the associations in both Laboriaux and Vila Autódromo enjoyed strong legitimacy, the association in Morro da Providência did not.[17] The residents' committee in Providência therefore sought support not from the local association, but rather from a wider network called the Community Forum of the Port. The Forum had been established to fight Porto Maravilha, the renewal plan for the old port area, and was supported by Afro-Brazilian culture bearers in the area, human rights activists, progressive NGOs who fought for 'the right to the city', academics from the Rio de Janeiro State University (UERJ) and city councillors belonging to the left and green opposition parties. Morro da Providência also received technical support from the same actors as Laboriaux to produce an alternative report on risk (Campos and

16   Interview with Maurício Campos, 21 November 2016.
17   The international drug trade achieved a stronghold in Rio de Janeiro's favelas in the 1980s, and has since had a strong influence on community politics and social life (Valladares, 2005; Arias, 2006). Many associations in Rio de Janeiro's favelas are notorious for forging shady relationships with drug traffickers and crooked politicians and businesses (Burgos, 1998).

Asvedo, 2011). In December 2012, a federal judge granted an injunction that suspended the Morar Carioca projects by arguing that the municipality had not fulfilled public consultation requirements. This provided momentary relief to the majority of residents who were under threat of displacement, as only the construction of the cable car (with its associated demolitions) could proceed.[18]

Vila Autódromo also established contact with NUTH. Furthermore, the AMPVA residents' association collaborated with public defenders to register community members who wanted to stay. The Mayor's Office had repeatedly claimed that the majority of residents wanted to *leave*, but AMPVA and NUTH registered the exact opposite.[19] The City's reasons for removing Vila Autódromo evolved from a plan to build the Olympic media centre on the premises, to the need for a security perimeter around the Olympic Park, to an environmental-risk-based argument. With the help of public defenders and other allies, residents were able to challenge all these justifications for evictions. In January 2011, a judge suspended the eviction process and gave the community a year's reprieve, during which no family moved out. AMPVA used this period to pursue an active 'foreign policy'. In June 2012, during the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20), it organized a march of solidarity for Vila Autódromo that attracted 4,000 people and garnered support from all central civil society networks, including the National Movement for the Right to Housing, the Popular Movement Center, and the People's Committee of the World Cup and the Olympics. AMPVA also made contact with well-known academics from two federal universities (UFRJ and Fluminense Federal University or UFF). These actors supported residents in formulating an alternative plan for upgrading the community—the People's Plan, which reconciled the community staying on with the demands of the 2016 Olympics (AMPVA, 2012). The People's Plan was developed by the community itself through participatory workshops, but received qualified professional input from more than forty urban planners, architects, social scientists and economists.

Thus, all three favelas created committees to represent their communities in their dialogues with public authorities, and all had outside networks of support. A Laboriaux activist emphasized that the Laboriaux community also established contact with Vila Autódromo and other favelas threatened by evictions to support and learn from each other. Crucially, all the case study areas had previous experiences with (threats of) evictions and could build on strategies that had proved successful in the past. Through mechanisms of brokerage, diffusion and coordinated action, their 'invented' spaces and strategies concatenated into a process of strong mobilization. By mobilizing different kinds of 'counter-knowledge' (see Table 2) they were able to deconstruct and delegitimize the municipality's framing of evictions as a necessity and successfully halt the City's attempt at complete or mass evictions at a time when other favela communities were being displaced. They were able to reference legal frameworks to demand in situ upgrading instead of evictions, and a more technical and judicial type of struggle took the upper hand. However, scattered evictions continued to take place, as the City side-stepped the committees to negotiate directly with individual families, skilfully navigating a 'gray space' (Yiftachel, 2009) between legality and illegality by manipulating it to the City's advantage.

City in Revolt

In June 2013, all of Brazil erupted in mass demonstrations that would radically alter power relations between favelas and public authorities in favour of the former, at least momentarily.

18   See C. Antunes (2013), 'Os descontentes do Porto' [The discontent of the Port]. *Folha de São Paulo* January [WWW document]. URL https://piaui.folha.uol.com.br/materia/os-descontentes-do-porto/ (accessed 10 February 2020).
19   See C. Osborn (2013) 'Vila Autódromo unites in protest following weeks of pressure', RioOnWatch 23 July [WWW Document]. URL https://www.rioonwatch.org/?p=10496 (accessed 10 February 2020).

TABLE 2 Three cases of anti-eviction resistance

	Laboriaux	Morro da Providência	Vila Autódromo
'Internal' mobilizing structures	• High level of social homogeneity • Low presence of drug trafficking and political clientelism • Previous experience of resisting evictions	• Low level of social homogeneity • High presence of drug trafficking and political clientelism • Previous experience of resisting evictions	• Moderate level of social homogeneity • No presence of drug trafficking and weak presence of political clientelism • Previous experience of resisting evictions
'External' mobilizing structures	• Technical counter-knowledge (alternative report on risk) • Support from academics, public defenders, technical experts	• Technical counter-knowledge (alternative report on risk) • Support from academics, public defenders, technical experts, courts, activists in Port area	• Technical counter-knowledge (People's Plan) • Support from academics, public defenders, technical experts, courts, wide range of activists, journalists, and left-wing parliamentarians

SOURCE: Authors' research

–   The June 2013 uprisings and the municipality's 'declaration of truce' with favelas

The June uprisings[20] were the largest street demonstrations in a generation. Protestors' demands included cheaper and higher-quality public services, eradication of corruption, inquiries into the excessive costs of the stadiums built for the 2014 FIFA World Cup and the 2016 Summer Olympics and, last but not least, a moratorium on forced evictions. On 20 June alone, approximately one million people were on the streets in Rio de Janeiro and two million in the whole of Brazil.[21] The June uprisings led to a dramatic increase in the scale and scope of contentious political actions against mega-event-driven urban development in Rio de Janeiro and throughout Brazil. Politicians were taken by surprise by the massive demonstrations and were quick to promise to listen to 'the voice of the streets', a key reference in the public debate in the months that followed (Harvey *et al*., 2013). Because the June uprisings can be regarded as a watershed, we argue for the fruitfulness of characterizing these demonstrations as a new political opportunity structure, which we call the City in Revolt.

In Laboriaux, local residents, together with residents of the larger Rocinha favela, organized a large demonstration on 25 June 2013. The demonstration resulted in local leaders being invited to meetings with the state and municipal governments. On 28 June they met with the governor and were promised that Laboriaux would be included in the PAC Program's infrastructure investments in Rocinha. They met with the mayor in late July, and the mayor subsequently visited Laboriaux on 3 August, where he apologized for previous injustices. He promised that no one else would have to leave and pledged to conduct the necessary containment work to secure the community against future landslides, as well as initiate other in situ upgrading projects.[22]

The June uprisings also appeared to change municipal–community relations in Morro da Providência. Together with activists from the old port area, Providência organized weekly demonstrations in August 2013. Following these demonstrations, the mayor announced that he wanted to engage in talks with the residents' committee and sent his right-hand advisor to the community to reach consensus about the future of the favela.[23]

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20   While the June uprisings take their name from the month in which they erupted, the demonstrations that comprised these events would continue throughout the months that followed.

21   See J. Watts (2013), 'Brazil erupts in protest: more than a million on the streets', *The Guardian* 21 June [WWW document]. URL https://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/jun/21/brazil-police-crowds-rio-protest (accessed 10 February 2020).

22   See Mundo Real (2013), 'Eduardo Paes finally visits Laboriaux, Rocinha' [WWW document]. URL http://mundoreal.org/eduardo-paes-visits-laboriaux-rocinha (accessed 14 February 2020).

23   Authors' own field observations, August 2013.

In Vila Autódromo, a large demonstration was organized on 23 July. On 8 August, Mayor Eduardo Paes met with residents of Vila Autódromo and acknowledged that there had been errors in the treatment of the community. He further stated that he would consider the possibility of the community remaining.[24] A series of meetings followed between the municipality and residents, who were accompanied by advisors. While the municipality kept arguing for the demolition of all existing buildings, it presented a plan to offer new houses within a smaller area to those who wanted to stay (Leal de Oliveira *et al.*, 2016; Sánchez *et al.*, 2016). In response to the municipality's plan, the team behind the People's Plan issued an updated design for upgrading existing community housing. The People's Plan presented a much cheaper solution than the municipality's plan, allowed residents to stay in the houses they had spent decades making into homes and met the requirements of the developers of the Olympic Park.

All three of our case communities therefore organized demonstrations during the June uprisings that connected their local struggles to wider urban disputes. This scale shift of contentious political actions against mega-event-driven eviction processes pressured the City into extending invitations to dialogue, which were perceived as a 'declaration of truce' with the favelas.

City in Crisis

While community activists in the three case study communities were initially hopeful about the widened political opportunity structure of the City in Revolt and the City's invitations to dialogue, they quickly became disillusioned with the outcomes of the negotiations. The findings we present in this article are in line with the findings of other researchers who argue that invited spaces of participation within neoliberal governance often serve to co-opt, repress or de-legitimize social movements and local communities (Cooke and Khotari, 2001; Miraftab, 2009). We connect this to a third turn in the political opportunity structure from late 2013 onwards to what we term the City in Crisis. As the dust settled after the June uprisings, the political and economic context in Rio de Janeiro and Brazil also changed. Two important factors were first, the mega-events drawing closer, and second, the Brazilian economy starting to contract, which subsequently led to reductions in public revenues and budgets. Consequently, the City could only prioritize emergencies. The City in Crisis presented both openings and limitations for favelas, which played out differently for the three communities.

–   A re-composition of the political opportunity structure

In Laboriaux, there were no further evictions after the mayor publicly announced in August 2013 that the community could remain. Arguably, the cost–benefit ratio of pushing through further evictions against strong and unified resistance worked out in the community's favour. The fact that Laboriaux's spatial location is peripheral to the City's entrepreneurial aspirations was also a key factor. As the mega-events drew closer and the economy weakened, favela evictions that were unnecessary for the success of the mega-events were no longer regarded as a priority. However, neither were the expensive in situ upgrades. Only around 50% of the projects that residents had been promised were completed, and areas at risk of experiencing future landslides have still not been secured (Burgos, 2016).

In Morro da Providência, the change of power relations during the City in Revolt lasted only a few months. As in Laboriaux, the mayor realized that the municipality had to prioritize the infrastructure projects that were linked to the mega-events most directly. The construction of the cable car was among these priorities, and it was inaugurated

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24   See RioOnWatch (2013), 'Victory for Vila Autódromo! Rio's mayor commits to permanence, urbanization, and fair compensation'. RioOnWatch 9 August [WWW document]. URL https://www.rioonwatch.org/?p=10734 (accessed 10 February 2020).

on 2 July 2014, just before the opening of the FIFA World Cup and the massive influx of soccer tourists.[25] Nearly BRL 75 million (US \$40 million) was spent on the project. The rest of the Morar Carioca interventions were no longer a priority.[26] On a positive note, this meant that the majority of families who had been threatened with eviction would be able to remain. However, the municipality ignored demands that homes to compensate those who had been evicted should be built on available land in the nearby port area, and resettled these residents on the outskirts of the city. The municipality handled these evictions using a divide-and-conquer strategy of negotiating directly with the individual families and sidelining the committee. Through this process, the municipality succeeded in fragmentizing resistance and reinforcing and strengthening the social divisions that were already present in the community, as activists prioritized saving their own homes. Organized crime was an important factor too. Drug traffickers had a much stronger hold on residents in Morro da Providência than in the other communities, and the stakes for activists were thus much higher.

In Vila Autódromo, unlike in Laboriaux, the cost–benefit calculation for evictions did not work out in the community's favour. The City rejected the updated People's Plan and continued to push for the complete eviction of the community, even going back on its proposal to reconstruct some houses. To understand why, we argue that we have to understand the City in Crisis as not only an economic but also a moral crisis. The Lava Jato corruption investigation exposed a massive bribery and kickback scheme involving politicians at the state and municipal levels in Rio de Janeiro and the construction companies responsible for mega-event developments.[27] The mayor thus had much to gain from keeping his promises to real-estate developers—promises that required the eviction of the residents of Vila Autódromo.[28] A combination of political and economic interests took a heavy toll on the community, and 2014 and 2015 were years of judicial and battlefield warfare. The municipality applied a carrot-and-stick approach that entailed accommodation and repression, offers of increasingly higher compensations to residents willing to move, and psychological and physical violence against those who were not, which resulted in all original housing eventually being demolished.[29]

However, a sort of settlement in a dual sense was reached. The community received immense support and publicity both nationally and internationally, and the City's conduct became a source of public embarrassment for Brazil. In an effort to lessen conflict before the Olympics, the City finally gave in three months before the start of the event and constructed new houses for 20 families on the premises of Vila Autódromo. While this settlement was celebrated as a small material gain, it represented a huge symbolic victory, as a combatant core of the struggling community survived, resulting in a possible scenario of not only the revival, but also of a future large-scale rebuilding of the community. In addition, the compensation, either in kind for those who moved to new homes in the Parque Carioca replacement housing complex, or in cash for those who refused to move there, had reached a scale that was unprecedented in the history of favela evictions in Brazil.[30]

25   However, the cable car has been out of service since December 2016 because of the financial crisis and because of a security crisis in and around the favela.

26   See K. Steiker-Ginzberg (2014), 'Morar Carioca: the dismantling of a dream favela upgrading program'. RioOnWatch 10 September [WWW document]. URL http://www.rioonwatch.org/?p=17687 (accessed 10 February 2020).

27   As we are writing this article, former governor Sergio Cabral and the heads of entrepreneur giants Odebrecht and OAS, who built the Olympic Park and Porto Maravilha, are in jail. Former mayor Eduardo Paes is under investigation, but seems to be escaping prosecution.

28   Promises were made to the developers of both the Olympic Park and the Parque Carioca housing complex to which evicted residents were resettled.

29   All-out demolitions started on 9 April 2014 and led to violent clashes between armed guards and residents. See K. Steiker-Ginzberg (2014), 'Diverging paths: Vila Autódromo residents resist, move on, await'. RioOnWatch 11 August [WWW document]. URL https://www.rioonwatch.org/?p=17177 (accessed 10 February 2020).

30   Today, many people who moved to Parque Carioca early on regret doing so, as those who resisted received better compensations.

TABLE 3   Outcomes and impacts

	Laboriaux	**Morro da Providência**	**Vila Autódromo**
Material outcome 1: evictions	10% evicted	25% evicted	95% evicted
Material outcome 2: in situ upgrades	Upgrading unfulfilled	Upgrading unfulfilled	Upgrading started but stalled because of violence on the part of the City
Material outcome 3: compensations	Low compensations, resettlement in periphery	Medium/low compensations, resettlement in periphery	Medium/high compensations, resettlement close by
Social impact: divisions	United community throughout	More divided community	From united to divided community
Political-symbolic impact	Not observed	Not observed	Large

SOURCE: Authors' research

How and why: understanding different outcomes and impacts

Table 3 shows the different outcomes and impacts of the three communities' struggles. To explain the differences in material outcomes 1 and 2 (evictions and compensation) it is necessary to take into account the political economy. The financial value of the land, the interests of real-estate actors, the number of voters associated with each community (Laboriaux being part of the larger Rocinha favela) and the subsequent cost–benefit calculations of the mayor were ultimately the defining factors that explain why Vila Autódromo, despite much stronger internal and external mobilizing structures than those of Laboriaux and Morro da Providência, had almost all its housing demolished. However, this does not explain the differences in compensations. Here, bottom-up factors need to be taken into consideration. Furthermore, we show that outcomes beyond the material are central when evaluating the effects and significance of these processes.

In terms of social impact Laboriaux has remained united, aided by the fact that its socially homogenous community was facing collective eviction. In contrast, the City's divide-and-conquer strategy in Providência and Vila Autódromo pushed activists to the brink and challenged the social fabric of the communities. Finally, in terms of political-symbolic effects, Vila Autódromo stands out as victorious in spite of having experienced the highest number of evictions. Meanwhile, the People's Plan for a community-controlled, participatory process of in situ upgrading has inspired several similar initiatives elsewhere in Brazil and was internationally recognized when it won the prestigious Urban Age Award from the Deutsche Bank and the London School of Economics.[31] Documentary films, coverage by TV and print media, and academic studies that centred on the case of Vila Autódromo clearly show that this community stands out as an exceptional case of immense symbolic significance that has challenged the International Olympic Committee and its lack of due diligence in human-rights matters.

In our attempt at understanding these outcomes and why they differed, our contentious politics approach has focused on the dynamics, mechanisms and processes that generated the favela movements' activities and led to their consequences. Crucially, we point out the importance of focusing on the dynamics of contention between favela residents, public authorities and the third parties that engaged in the contentions by focusing contextual attention on how the actions of these actors led to counter-actions and changing power relations within dynamic, evolutional processes. In other words, differences can be attributed not only to structural conditions nor to differences in the communities' capacities and strategies of engagement, but also to the dynamic back-and-forth games among the many players. This approach provides a far richer

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31   See K. Steiker-Ginzberg (2013), 'Vila Autódromo People's Plan wins Deutsche Bank Urban Age Award', RioOnWatch 20 December [WWW document]. URL https://www.rioonwatch.org/?p=12851 (accessed 10 February 2020).

understanding of the processes of eviction and resistance than a top-down/bottom-up approach, and shows the fruitfulness of a contentious politics approach to the politics of slums.

Conclusion

In this article we compared three case study areas in terms of their relatively successful anti-eviction resistance in Rio de Janeiro during the largest round of mass favela evictions in the city's history. While there were differences between the justifications the City provided for the evictions in the three communities and in terms of their positions within the urban development agenda of the City, they faced threats of eviction at the same time and within the same political, juridical and territorial jurisdiction. Moreover, in contrast to many other favelas, they were all able to collectively resist the City's eviction attempts. To examine and understand the similarities and differences in the communities' resistance approaches and the outcomes observed in the three case study areas, we combined and extended two dominant narratives in the literature regarding the politics of slums—what we call the 'city against slum dwellers' and the 'slum dwellers against the city'.

The top-down 'city against slum dwellers' approach helps frame and understand the political-economic structures in Rio de Janeiro's pre-2016-Olympics era. It underlines how ruling elites used the sense of urgency and exceptionality created around mega-events to circumvent social and legal norms and initiate actions that were politically and economically calculated, such as launching mass evictions of favela communities at a time when non-eviction was the legal norm. However, this suggests that this exceptionality was the rule and maintained as a status quo throughout the period of interest, owing to its strong structuralist (and negative) tenor. In this research, we have shown how the political opportunity structure of the City of Exception was contradicted first by the City in Revolt intermezzo, and subsequently by the financially constrained City in Crisis period. These intense changes challenge the 'capture' hypothesis of the top-down approach by showing that there were larger opportunities for resistance and revolt than a static or deterministic 'city against slum dwellers' approach would suggest.

The bottom-up 'slum dwellers against the city' approach, by contrast, helps identify how favela dwellers engaged in a 'facts and rights-based' kind of politics that is concerned with producing technical-environmental facts about their settlements and with emphasizing their legal rights. By deconstructing and delegitimizing the City's arguments for evictions and by furthermore framing their cause in connection to wider debates about the City's mega-event-driven urban development (especially during the June uprisings), the communities successfully halted the large-scale evictions with which the City had initially threatened. This focus on the political agency and capacity of favela dwellers is compatible with the City in Revolt moment, while it has weak links with the City of Exception and is clearly incompatible with the City in Crisis. It falls short as an explanation for why Vila Autódromo, despite internal and external mobilizing structures that were much stronger than those of Laboriaux and Morro da Providência, had almost all of its housing demolished.

This means that we cannot look merely at top-down or bottom-up aspects, but need to combine and extend the narratives that approach the politics of slums as being respectively 'from above' or 'from below' by means of a relational approach. This approach allows us to apply our analytical-theoretical framework of contentious politics of slums to underline the politics of slums as produced through dynamics of contention between public authorities and favela-based anti-eviction movements. Crucially, we also emphasize the key role that different third-party actors and institutions—such as technical counter-expertise, the public defenders' office, the courts, the media, academics, social movements and other networks of activists, progressive

parliamentarians, as well as the financial and landed elites of the city—played in the processes we analysed in this article. Such actors are only marginally considered in top-down/bottom-up approaches. By contrast, our analysis has shown that the mediating level of city politics and power coalitions involving third-party actors is more important than the actors in direct conflict with each other think. Our analytical approach has brought this to the fore, and has therefore allowed us to capture the dynamic, interactive processes through which the contentious politics of evictions and resistance unfolded.

In conclusion, the interaction between 'internal' and 'external' mobilizing structures are key to our understanding of the outcomes of community resistance against evictions. Furthermore, in this dynamic approach, the multitude of contextual factors that shape contentious relationships (such as actors' political and economic circumstances and political alignment, changing political opportunity structures, monetary land values, and other economic factors) may play into the hands of either side—the resisting community or the calculating top management of the City. Finally, multi-dimensionality is needed when assessing the outcomes of such contentions—using not only material but also social and political-symbolic criteria in a complementary manner.

Applied in this way, the contentious politics framework promises to be highly fruitful as an approach to uncover the politics of slums in any city in the global South.

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