Perceptions of Education for Social Mobility. A Case Study of Youth in a Brazilian *Favela*[1]

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1. Introduction: Social Inequality, Social Mobility and Education in Brazil

Brazil has been, since decades ago, one of the most unequal countries in the world (Gacitúa 2008:1). The issue has been widely studied from an economic and quantitative perspective, taking into account variables such as income, job quality, access to education, and race; but there is a lack of more qualitative studies in this regard that explore marginal populations' perceptions about the social structures that configure inequality and oftentimes prevent them from upward social mobility (Gacitúa 2008:3).

In response to this gap in the literature, this project attempts to address a key issue in social inequality: the relationship between educational achievements and social mobility. The returns of education have been studied extensively in Brazil, concluding in all cases that there is a positive correlation connecting years of schooling, better jobs, and earnings to a consequent improvement in societal positions. Nevertheless, these studies have focused primarily on the relationship between two variables (education and earnings) *per se,* and less on the internal processes that support such a connection, especially those that take place in individuals' lives. Accordingly, this study proposes to explore the perceptions of young men and women of low-income families with regard to the role of education as a tool for upward social mobility; on the

assumption that this is a socio-psychological process, the study also examines how this perception is constructed and internalized.

The importance of this study resides, on the one hand, in the fact that it constitutes a first step towards answering questions about some sociological factors that can perpetuate or ameliorate urban poverty. On the other hand, it would contribute new insights to improve the way educational projects intervene in the lives of their beneficiaries as well as policies in post-secondary education – insights that will be of equal use to NGOs, other institutions, and policy makers.

1.2. General and Guiding Questions

As is essential in every research project, the information collected has to be analyzed in light of a few guiding questions, which try to respond to the more general overarching research inquiry. In this sense, the general research question of the present project could be phrased as:

How do young men and women from low-income families of a Brazilian favela see education as a tool for upward social mobility, and which factors have influenced their vision in this regard?

In order to respond to this general question, it is necessary to formulate more specific, guiding questions. These would be the following:

1. Does an ideology of existence of a meritocratic system exist in the *favela* context? If so, does it create incentives or disincentives amongst the poor youth to see education as a vehicle for social mobility?

2. What is the role of family, school and other socialization spaces in reinforcing or weakening such ideology in the youth's minds?

3. How is higher education related to "being a better person" or "gaining more respect" from other people in this Brazilian context?

4. On the other hand, to what extent is this ideology accepted, and how is it actively critiqued and contested?

5. Is the lifestyle of the upper-classes legitimized for the favela youth? If so, does this reality create pressure on them to move up in the social scale?

6. What are the strategies these young men and women have to move up in the social scale? In what ways are educational plans present in connection with these endeavors?

7. Is there perceived to be a clear connection between higher education degrees and access to better paid jobs?

8. What are the youth's concepts of good and/or ideal jobs? What components are present (ex: salary, job conditions, job environment, qualifications needed, schedules, manual Vs. intellectual type of job, etc)? How are these components and jobs related with higher education degrees?

9. What are the favela youth's perceptions of racism in their environment (community, city, country)? How do they situate themselves? Do they feel in disadvantage because of their race? Does education have a whitening effect for them, or do they see education as a tool to fight against whitening?

10. How do their experiences in school (good/bad grades, progress/repetition, courses they like/dislike, etc) affect or interfere in their preferences for acquiring higher education degrees? Do the best students tend to have better expectations of education as vehicle for social mobility?

1.3 Methodology of the Study

Given the exploratory nature of this study, after the first literature review, the methodology proposed for the primary information gathering was qualitative, based on in-depth interviews to young men and women of a Rio de Janeiro's *favela* named Rocinha. Now, it is important to explain why decided to carry out this study in a *favela*, and ultimately, why Rocinha. When I came up with the idea of doing a study about education for social mobility among urban youth in Brazil, given my interest in social development, it seemed important to me to focus on the portion of the population in most need: the poor.

In the context of urban Brazil, the poor generally live in *favelas*; therefore I started to look for any possible contacts in any of the main Brazilian cities, in order to gain access to the population of my study. This is how during my search I met Dr. Luciana Namorato, professor in the Department of Spanish and Portuguese at Indiana University – Bloomington who referred me to her former colleague and friend Dr. Paul Sneed, professor in the Portuguese department at the University of Kansas, and founder and current member of the directive board of an NGO named Instituto Dois Irmãos (IDI), an institution that runs different social projects with the youth of Rocinha[3]. Having made the first contact with Dr. Sneed, I found out that an important amount of the manpower this NGO uses is based on voluntary work, and that they receive local as well as international volunteers on a regular basis. That is how I proposed to Dr. Sneed as well as the other officials from IDI to work as a volunteer for a few months while I was performing my research.

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[3] Dois Irmãos is an NGO located in Rocinha, a slum located in Rio de Janeiro and considered the largest *favela* of Brazil. This institution is currently working on multiple projects with adolescents. For more information see: www.2bros.org

After a few weeks, I presented to them my research proposal and after approval I received a confirmation/support letter from them with which I could eventually apply for a Tinker Summer Research Grant for the summer of 2009. Once in Rocinha, my duties as a volunteer were very irregular and went from helping with some English lessons with children or taking some of the children on short fieldtrips, to participating in the construction of a rooftop at the building of the NGO. In any case, the versatility of my tasks put me in touch with different people within the NGO and the community of Rocinha.

I have to mention that, as well as many other volunteers from the IDI, I decided to live in the *favela* for the length of my stay. By recommendation of the people from IDI, I rented a space in a shared room at the volunteer's house called Casa de Cachopa. Cachopa is one of the many sectors of Rocinha, located at the middle of the hill, at about fifteen minutes of walking from the bottom. The building of IDI is located in another sector known as the Valão, at the base of the hill, therefore those fifteen minutes of walking up and down the hill represented a daily commute that—even when strenuous—enabled me to get to know more places in the neighborhood, and at the same time, at least at the beginning, to put my location skills to the test.

I gave myself the first couple of weeks for getting settled and ready to begin with my research, which included getting a local cell phone for contacting people. Only after this time did I feel confident enough to go to places I have not been before, or following the locals' directions, especially at night when it is more difficult to distinguish places due to the poor public illumination. At the same time, even when I spent a majority of the time inside Rocinha, I used these two weeks to get to know about the transportation system in Rio de Janeiro, which is normally very chaotic.

After this short period of adaptation, I started to identify possible respondents for my interviews. My target population was composed of young men and women from 14 to 20 years old who are currently studying or have finished the secondary level[4]. First, I started looking for potential respondents who were in contact with IDI, with whom I could get an interview more easily, using the reference of this institution. I succeeded in interviewing a couple of youngsters with this method, and then decided that I needed to expand my network of respondents if I wanted to have more diverse and representative cases. This is why I asked my own first respondents to please put me in contact with one or two friends of them who could be possibly interested in helping me with an interview. I tried this method again with several of my new respondents, and even when not always effective this resulted in getting me some more cases. Another way for me to get interviews was through the new people I met at the *favela* every week: neighbors, my host family, friends from the local gym, other volunteers from the IDI, teachers from local schools, etc. Of course, as is common in this type of methodology, the rate of absence or tardiness to the appointments for interviews was pretty high; this forced me to re-schedule interviews numerous times and even to discard potential informants from my list.

At the moment of contacting my potential respondents, after introducing myself I made a brief introduction of the study and handed a copy of the Informed Consent Form for the study, in Portuguese (see Annex 2). After a few days for consideration, I contacted them once again to either confirm their participation in the study or just hear that they were not interested. If they accepted participating then I collected the mentioned form signed by them (and their parents if necessary) and made an appointment. The interviews took place in a confidential environment

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[4] Formal education in Brazil is divided in two periods: one equivalent to primary school, also called "first grade," composed of eight years or "series", and a second one equivalent to secondary school called "second grade", composed of three series. For practical reasons we will refer to the first grade studies as "primary school" and second grade studies as "secondary school".

in all cases, at either the office of IDI or the residences of my respondents, according to their preference. As agreed with them, the names of the respondents as well as any detail about their narrations that could identify them have been changed and will remain anonymous. As a result of my stay, I collected very valuable information from a group of 14 young men and women, cases which this research is based on. The interviews with the young people were structured according to an interview guide of 76 questions (see Annex 1), having a variable duration of between one and two hours each.

At the same time, I considered it important to get some information from some key informants that include: teachers from local schools, representatives of NGO's, and experts in the field of education in the Brazilian context. In these cases, a less structured interview was conducted, focusing primarily on the expertise of the informant. In all the cases, the affiliations with both Indiana University – Bloomington and the IDI were very helpful and opened numerous opportunities for getting information from other institutions.

2. Theoretical Approach: The Concept of social space and its implications for social mobility

Because of the sociological nature of this study, we find it useful to use Bourdieu's theory of social space (Bourdieu 1991 and 1997). According to Bourdieu, the social space constitutes the arena for social distinction, that is reflected in our preferences and taste (internalized schemas of perception and judgment), which he refers to as *habitus*. Our *habitus* is determined mostly by our position in the social space (it is the internalization and naturalization of the attitudes we are exposed to in this position), and the position itself depends of two main variables or "forms of capital": "cultural capital" (income) and "economical capital" (education).

The location of an individual in the social space is determined by the total amount of capital he or she possesses, as in a Cartesian plane:

	More Cultural Capital	Less Cultural Capital
More Economic capital	Ex: Businessmen	Ex: Small entrepreneurs
Less Economic Capital	Ex: Intellectuals	Ex: Peasants

*Adaptation based on Bourdieu 1991 and 1997.

The occupations listed above serve as examples of possible candidates for the respective quadrants. Of course, the amount of capital for certain occupations may vary within countries, therefore, the context of the society to be analyzed has to be taken into account. At the same time, there are infinite intermediate points in the plane, which means that a person could be closer or farther from a quadrant limit. Given an individual's position in the social space, the global or aggregated capital is called "symbolic capital". People in a society with similar symbolic capital are expected to have the same lifestyle and thus the same taste, preferences and consumption patterns; for example, they may belong to the same type of organizations, have similar types of jobs, attend the same schools and universities, etc. Hence, they have the same socialization spaces, which is a reason why they develop similar ways of thinking and approaching life.

The group located at the top of the social pyramid (thus having the most economic and cultural capital) normally has the means to legitimize their lifestyle as the most desirable. The two major ways to achieve this legitimatization are through the educational system and the media. The immediate consequence of this symbolic domination from the ruling class is that the

lower classes accept this lifestyle as the ideal way to be; therefore they want to be like those at the top of the social space. From a more philosophical and Marxist point of view, Paulo Freire divides the Brazilian social space in two: the oppressors and the oppressed. In his exam of the dynamics between these two groups a process of legitimization of the dominant classes' lifestyle also takes place. Borrowing from the words of Freire, the oppressed feel "an irresistible attraction for the oppressor, for their life patterns. To participate of those patterns constitutes an uncontrollable aspiration. In their insanity they want, no matter what, be like the oppressor, imitate him follow him." (Freire 1972:43)[5].

Given the characteristics of Brazilian society, I would like to add one more variable to the spectrum of the social space. This variable would be race, and the range of value goes from the most desirable (white) to the less desirable (black), with all the possible combinations in between. We are aware of the complexity of this variable and also acknowledge the existence of more than two antipodal races, but for the sake of simplicity, we have decided to consider the two which we believe are the most relevant (white and black) as extremes of the scale. All the logic of function of the other two capitals applies for this third form of capital, as well, including the relationship of domination from the most white over the most black. It is important to observe that we understand the racial capital as a dynamic feature that is not just determined by skin color and physical appearance. Instead, since it has an external representation, it has a strong connection with the visible manifestations of the other two forms of capital. As a result, external signs of poverty or wealth, as well as high or low education, can darken or whiten a person in the eyes of the society.

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[5] Original in Spanish. My own translation.

The social reality, understood as we presented it, creates awareness about the variables or capitals that take place in the struggle for social distinction and consequently puts pressure in the minds of the individuals for pursuing more of the various forms of capital, in practical terms: make more money, get good educational credentials and/or become whiter.

One last remark regarding these categories is that even when we separate them in order to achieve the best understanding of the theory, they are highly interactive and rarely appear alone. Therefore, a very strong positive correlation exists between the three of them: the wealthiest tend to be better educated and white and vice versa.

3. Rio's Favelas in Context

Historian Julio Cesar Pino analyzed the trajectory of the favelas in Rio de Janeiro from the 1930's till the 1990's from a Marxist approach. Pino's conclusion is that the *favela's* households (as different to the notion of familiy) are the place in which the poverty of the working class is reproduced in urban settlements like Rio de Janeiro (Pino 1997). This notion is eloquent when referring the limited opportunities the *favelados* have for upward social mobility.

The squatter settlements in the outer parts of Rio de Janeiro were populated by the urban poor that were looking for cheaper land, being close to a middle/upper class neighbor, a factory or any other place that could serve as a workplace. In this sense, the favelas work as a community that is closely connected to the rest of the metropolis. Nevertheless, favelas have been frequently ignored by the rest of the *cariocas* unless they felt threatened by the crime or violence from the shantytowns (Pino 1997).

According to various authors, the favelas are a consequence of the cities' modernization during the process of incorporating the rural worker into the urban economy (Pino 1997, Queiroz and Correa 2001) This process resulted in an "incomplete industrialization" in which the priority was to bring wages down, creating, according to Pino, three categories of *favelados*: a proletariat formally linked to the job market, a sub proletariat with erratic participation in the labor force and insufficient earnings and a high level of unemployment (Pino 1997:108). It is important to mention that through the eyes of authors like Pino, squatters and laborers, the working class and the *favelados* are oftentimes the same people.

When talking about the Brazilian family in history, Pino emphasizes the colonial heritage from the time of the *fazenda* and the *engenho*, in which the dualism of master/slave was the common rule (Pino 1997:13). Nowadays, the Brazilian family size has shrunk for many reasons, such as industrialization (whose mode of production is individualized and keeps the family members separated), more educational opportunities for women, more frequent practice of birth control, and economic crises (inflation). This also contributed to break the solidarity with the extended family: the migrant household once in the city could only find space for themselves (Pino 1997:16-18).

The main role of the households in favelas is, as we suggested before, reproducing the labor force while perpetuating the inequality with the rest of the city and the marginalization of women and children. Since Brazilian society is *machista*, the male normally earns more than the woman and is the principal salary earner. Typically, the wife stays at home and may engage in domestic production for outsiders while taking care of her children. Children are expected to contribute to the household income and concentrate on education in order to improve family prospects for the future (Pino 1997:11).

According to this scheme, all the members of the family internalize the mechanics of the capitalist society and their own role inside it with a chain of segregation and/or subordination: the male worker is segregated in the factory, the female is segregated at home, and the children are segregated at the school. The male is supervised by his boss, the female by her husband, and the children by their parents, all of which suffer from unequal access to goods, public services, education and leisure (Pino 1997:12)

If this is the case, it is key for our study to explore how this role is internalized by the youth and put into practice. On the other hand, the expectations of being "productive" for the family may push against educational studies (Alves 2008). Indeed, the background of migration could have marked the expectations of the family members, especially the youngest members, given that the parents of the migrant family wanted a better life and better opportunities. Perhaps the profile of the migrant *favelado* implies certain anti-conformism and therefore a natural push to work harder for going up in the social scale. The role of education, together with other factors, seems to be decisive in this regard. In addition, the life cycle of the individual has to be taken into account. According to Pino's study, most *favelados* got married or started a family in their early twenties; marriage together with having children could definitely influence in educational decisions and social mobility (Pino 1997).

On the other hand, it is interesting that, according to Pino, some favelas can function as a "miniature city" (Pino 1997:67). This reveals certain strength in the social reproduction of the *favelados*, meaning that they reproduce themselves in a "social endogamy" in which they meet their friends, spouses, celebrate parties, find jobs, go to the school, etc. As is apparent from what we mentioned above, this reality is compatible with our theoretical approach, and the process of social endogamy is nothing more than the socialization of people of the same

lifestyle. An interesting question for our study in this regard would be to explore how exposed the favela inhabitants (especially the youngest) are to people from other parts of the city and other social classes. Inevitably, this issue deals with the assumption of a "favela subculture/identity" as well as the reach of other relevant social networks for social mobility.

Pino also states that the evaluation of one-self economic condition in the *favelas* comes from the comparison of salary and consumption of an individual's household to the ones of relatives, neighbors, and friends (Pino 2007:11). Nevertheless, in accordance with what we stated before, the comparisons are not only circumscribed to what happens in the *favela*, but also refer to the consumption patterns of the upper classes. In other words, is it not just how much an individual possesses but how close (or far) this individual is from the models determined by the rich.

Even when the position of the *favelado* is not always the same due to differences in social and economic conditions among them (Pino 1997:131), the general image of this character is not the most desirable in Brazilian society. This brings us to many questions about the *favelado* identity, including potential levels of shame or proud for residing in the favela.

However, it is important to consider the notion of the *favelado* or *morador da favela* as a pejorative form to name a person who lacks of any culture, is disrespectful or just do not share the same social codes of interaction and patterns of consumption of the middle and upper classes. As Sneed remarks, this character is seen as a "second class citizen" (Sneed 2003:7)

4. The Panorama of Social Exclusion and Mobility in Brazil

In what could be considered the most recent and updated work about social exclusion and social mobility in Brazil, Gacitúa examines the Brazilian context of the last 20 years, concluding that Brazil presents the worse scenario for the socially excluded: low social mobility and high inequality (Gacitúa 2008). This report also highlights the different mechanisms that operate to systematically exclude certain population groups. Furthermore, the study uses a new "social exclusion approach" referring to the processes that create barriers that prevent vulnerable groups from accessing assets or productive resources, participating in the market, and being involved in social, cultural and political institutions (Gacitúa 2008:4). Following closely the scheme of this work, in the following pages we would like to briefly review the mechanisms of social exclusion that are more relevant for our study.

4.1 Development and Educational Policies

According to Gacitúa, Brazil has experienced a "conservative modernization" that has benefited the non-poor more than the poor; process that has been directed by the same elites that have ruled the country for centuries. As a result, the inequalities have increased while failing to incorporate large segments of the population into modern segments of the economy and diminishing the rights of these social groups for accessing the services provided by the government. (Gacitúa 2008:7).

Among the policies that could promote social equality, those regarding education have special relevance. Nevertheless, when discussing the educational policies in Brazil, we can find two very opposed perspectives. Politicians like Souza (Souza 2001), as a former Minister of

Education, list several initiatives and highlight the improvements achieved during the period between 1995 and 2000. Among these improvements is a long list of compensatory programs, the expansion of the coverage in basic education and the overall upgrading of the education's quality at all levels; all this results as a part of the policy of educational expansion initiated by the Brazilian government two decades ago.

On the other side of the spectrum, from a Marxist perspective, Del Pino (Del Pino 2004) states that the educational system, together with the labor structure, supports social exclusion. In this sense, the development of essential skills through education is being reorganized to respond to the demands of the neoliberalism and not to the needs of the population. In the words of Del Pino, this issue has been reduced from a political-social problem to a technical matter (Del Pino 2004). In any case, what is interesting about both perspectives is that the two of them have the same point of departure. Souza and Del Pino both identify changes in the labor market as a consequence of the globalization process and productive restructuration together with an increasing demand for better-qualified workers.

With the same token, in reference to policies in education, Park's argument is that, because of the slow pace of educational expansion in Brazil, this policy had very limited effects on reducing the inequality of payment (salaries). The economic theory behind this hypothesis is that, because of the competition among individuals for the jobs, the returns to education decrease when the overall levels of education are higher (Park 1996). On a personal remark, this may be one of the reasons why the dominant classes in Brazil have been reluctant during the last few decades to the idea of establishing mechanisms that could provide access to the poor to improve the quality of their education. Indeed, according to our theoretical framework, good quality education is a key factor in achieving prestige and social recognition.

4.2 Places of Origin and Residence

The second mechanism of exclusion would be the location within the country and the major cities. Nearly half of the Brazilian poor population lives in the Northeast in rural or small urban areas (Gacitúa 2008:10). Most of the population lives in farm households located in remote, isolated, and sparsely populated areas of low productivity where they do not benefit from technological innovations or the economic growth of Brazil. Another large portion of the poor lives in the *favelas*. These two groups, especially in rural areas, have limited access to public services such as secondary education, transportation, electricity, water, sewage, etc. However, the exclusion is not only in the supply of services but also in the social arena. People from the Northeast and the *favelas* are frequently discriminated against in the job market because they are immediately associated with either the poverty and/or the criminal behavior of these places (Gacitúa et. al 2008:12).

Queiroz and Correa (Queiroz and Correa 2001) discuss the characteristics of some urban patterns of inequality. They argue that the idea of a *favela* as a bad place to live, and therefore opposed to "*bairro*"[6]*,* constitutes an ideology that legitimizes the discrimination of the *favelados* in the labor market and pushes them to accept lower wages. As a consequence, some people who live in the *favelas* that have achieved certain level of stability and economic progress feel it is necessary to leave these areas. This phenomenon is called residential mobility.

In the same line of research, Alves analyze the relationship between residential segregation and school backwardness in Rio de Janeiro, concluding that the risk of school dropout is associated with the residence in *favelas* (Alves et al. 2008). This author also distinguishes two types of *favelas*: those located near wealthier zones of the city and those

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[6] "Bairro" is the Portuguese term for neighborhood.

situated in the low-income neighborhoods. The relevance of this distinction is that in the *favelas* surrounding wealthy neighborhoods, the probability of backwardness is greater than in those located in low-income zones of Rio de Janeiro. According to the report, this phenomenon exists because the wealthier neighborhoods provide *favelados* with job opportunities, and therefore the youth have more incentives for leaving the school and start working earlier. The risk is even greater when we insert variables like gender or race in the analysis. This study shows that the risk of backwardness increases by 18% in the case of young males and by 22% and 32% for the cases of *mulatos* and black students, respectively (Alves et al. 2008:139). Even though our study is qualitative, it would be interesting to observe these relationships based on the opinions of informants.

4.3 The Educational System

Indeed, it has been proven in numerous studies that there is a strong relationship between education and social class (Gacitúa 2008, Barros 1996, Park 1996, Del Pino 2004, Reis 1991, Da Silva 1988, Pastore 1982). Schooling also enhances employment opportunities, but few have access to high quality education. One important remark is that education has positive effects in social mobility in every level but the returns increase significantly after secondary education. Accordingly, getting a university degree after school is considered the "big jump". This detail is crucial because it is during secondary schooling that the majority of dropouts occur among lower class adolescents; and those who finish secondary school are rarely accepted to state universities where the competition for admission is high. All that said, it is also important to consider that education itself does not produce jobs; the economy is what produces jobs and

those with the highest level of education compete better in the labor market and get the few available positions.

In his work, Reis (Reis 1991), using data from ten Brazilian annual Household Surveys for the period 1976-1986, finds strong correlations between education and wage inequality, affirming that in metropolitan Brazil education accounts for almost 50 percent of the inequality in wages (Reis 1991:119). Another important finding from this study is that inequality is much greater in big cities than it is in the less- developed areas, mainly the North and Northeast. For our case of study, in Rio de Janeiro the level of inequality in wages is in the middle range. An important remark has to be made about these conclusions. Because of the methodology of this study, there is no distinction between the direct and indirect effects of schooling in wage differences. The former alludes to the valorization of the skills in the labor market and the tendency to offer better jobs and wages to more skilled people; this is the most "visible" effect of education. In the latter, the educational process gives an individual access to broader social networks, which at some point could play an important role in the job seeking process.

From a qualitative approach, Da Silva (Da Silva 1988) explores the heterogeneity of the school system among different classes in urban Brazil. In his study, he concludes that the members of these classes are processed differentially in schools in order to fit positions in the occupational structure accordingly (Da Silva 1988:55). While children from the upper class are socialized to be independent and autonomous, their counterparts from the lower classes receive a type of education focused on uncritical obedience and the repetition and memorization of information. At the same time, his article highlights the fact that, for the case of lower-income children, the school represents a space that provides protection for them, especially when they life in *favelas* or dangerous neighborhoods. These points are important

and raise some questions about the schooling experience of the youth in our study with regard to the classroom experience, as well as a positive/negative vision of school as a space of protection and control at the same time. In our opinion, this experience has the potential to mark their perceptions and expectations of the educational system substantially.

One interesting thing about the residential pattern of the students among these cases is that those from lower classes tend to live closer to schools while those from better socioeconomic status are located in the most elegant and residential areas, typically further from where they study (Da Silva 1988:61). A hypothesis that could explain this phenomenon is that the lower income families would prefer to economize transportation resources and time when taking their kids to the school, whereas in the upper class schools provide their own transportation. In the opinion of Da Silva, this differentiation obeys to a prevailing pattern of social segregation (Da Silva 1988:61). Indeed, according to our perspective, this social segregation turns into a spatial separation that makes the youth of the same social classes share the same socialization spaces (school, clubs, parties, parks, entertainment centers, etc) which at the same time are associated with a set of experiences that, as we understood, configures a similar way of thinking and approaching life.

Barros (Barros 1996) highlights three other undesirable characteristics of the education in Brazil, with its correspondent consequences in social inequality. First, educational attainments in Brazil are remarkably low, especially if we compare them with the levels in other middle-income countries. (Park 1996:267 also underlines this point). To tackle this problem, the Brazilian government has initiated a process of educational expansion with emphasis on primary and secondary education aiming to simultaneously increase the level and reduce the inequalities in education. A second feature refers to the strong correlation between the schooling of youth

and that of their parents and grandparents. This one not only would be an indicator of lack of equal opportunity but also implies the existence of limits for social mobility in Brazil. The last attribute is the presence of regional differences in socioeconomic characteristics and levels of educational attainment of children. This feature has its extremes, within the country, in the poorer and less educated Northeast and the richer and better educated Southeast, and within the big cities such as Rio de Janeiro in the wealthy neighbors and the favelas.

Barros also shows that the parents' levels of schooling in the Southeast are not only higher but also more equal between mothers and fathers. Indeed, the gap decreases at higher levels of education in both cases. Going even further, Barros observes the previously studied role of education as a factor for assortative mating, meaning that men and women with similar levels of education are much more likely to marry, which would reinforce the reproduction of inequities in education (Barros 1996: 345). For our study, would be interesting to explore the role of assortative mating in the aspirations and future plans of the young men and woman of the favelas. The key question is whether or not their own expected social mobility implies certain selectivity in their choice of their future spouses.

4.4 Employment Conditions and Occupational (In)Mobility

Employment conditions and the structure of occupational mobility in Brazil constitute the fourth exclusion mechanism. Only a small portion of the total labor force has a formal job, which includes access to the full set of worker's benefits. The bulk of the active population has precarious employment or is unemployed (Gacitúa 2008:14). Precarious employment in Brazil encompasses no benefits, instability, low wages, unsecure working conditions, and extended

working shifts. On the other hand, the informal sector is virtually disconnected with the rest of the economy, thus it does not benefit from the economic growth.

In a pioneer study, Pastore examined the phenomenon of occupational mobility in Brazil (Pastore 1982). Given that measuring social mobility in the broader sense is a very difficult task, he decided to use variable occupational mobility as a proxy of social mobility (Pastore, 1982:27). Of course, he recognizes the existence of the other many variables in the definition of the individual's location in the social space, both achieved and ascribed, such as education, social networks, age, gender, social origin and occupation (more in the line of Bourdieu's work).

Pastore's conclusions about the dynamics of the social mobility in Brazil (during the 70's) are that the industrialization process has moved the lower strata upwards, especially through migration from rural jobs to lower industrial ones. This mobility has been typically inter-generational, upwards, and goes from the agricultural stratum to the working class. Notwithstanding, the majority have only traveled short distances in the social structure, even when there is a lot of room for upward mobility.

4.5 Gender Differences

Gender is also a discrimination criterion, especially when talking about access to education and better jobs (Gacitúa 2008:15). According to Gacitúa, there are smaller earnings and more jobs in the informal sector. Even when comparing women and men with similar levels of education the gap is consistent, reinforcing the hypothesis of gender-based discrimination even with more strength in the upper levels. Despite the higher levels of education of women

nowadays this gap still exists; although it has decreased considerably. In 1977, men earned 70% more than woman while in 1997 this differential had dropped to 25%.

4.6 Race Matters

The last mode of exclusion examined by Gacitúa is race. Approximately 45% of Brazil's population is of African descent, but they earn half the average income of the white population. As well as in the case of women, "nonwhites" (especially black population) are also discriminated against in the job market. They have smaller earnings and more jobs in the informal sector. Even when it might be seen as an economic problem, the social exclusion of nonwhites is also a racial and cultural phenomenon whose base is on the preconceptions about the good and bad race. During the last decades the tendency in Brazil has been not to talk about racism while acknowledging his existence, this phenomenon is known as "Brazilian style racism". In more recent times, after the introduction of positive action policies and the quota system for admission in public universities have been more discussion about issues of race.

As a conclusive reflection, this information makes clear the idea of social mobility as a process that takes place within a system, a social structure. This structure in the case of Brazil is particularly designed for perpetuating the social differences in many ways. Hence, when the individual fights to achieve upward social mobility is not alone but blocked by several mechanisms. This is the reason why when studying the social mobility of the poor we also have to take into consideration what happens outside their reality and how these phenomena are connected with them.

5. Description of the Site: Rocinha, the *Favela-bairro*

This description is based on my own experience as a resident of Rocinha and complemented by a recently published census of the community (GERJ 2009), and Paul Sneed's work (Sneed 2003). Sneed, in probably the most in-depth study ever performed at the site, carried out an ethnographic study that analyses the culture of drug trafficking, and specifically its expression through the *proibidão*[7] funk. Having lived several years in the community, he provides background information on social mechanics and economic organization of the community of Rocinha in general terms.

Rocinha is considered the largest favela in Latin America. According to the census, its population would be around one hundred thousand inhabitants or *moradores* (GERJ 2009). Due to its strategic location in the middle of one of the wealthiest zones of Rio de Janeiro, the *Zona Sul*, Rocinha receives considerably more attention from the city government as well as local and international NGO's than most other *favelas*. There is not official information about the number of civil society organizations or projects working in Rocinha, but raw estimates say that there are currently more than a hundred of these initiatives. Another form in which the residents from Rocinha benefit from its location is through employment. People from Rocinha usually work either in one of the neighborhoods of the *Zona Sul* or inside the community. (GERJ 2009: 42).

Rocinha constitutes a very vibrant community that literally never sleeps. The Via Ápia, the main street of Rocinha, situated at the bottom of the hill, is the most commercial and transited strip in the neighborhood:

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[7] The word *proibidão* –*which t*ranslates into English as "very prohibited"–alludes to a specific type of funk music characterized by its lyrics that speak about the gangsters of the *favelas*. For more details about this genre see Sneed 2003.

"By day, the Via Ápia is run amuck with innumerable motorcycle taxis, trucks, cars, and bicycles, as well as thousands of pedestrians of all ages, shapes and sizes, going to or coming home from work or school. There are several bars and restaurants lining the street, as well as furniture stores, bingo halls, hair salons, and stands selling hot dogs or corn-on-the-cob. Buildings as many as five or six stories tall overlook the street, which gently slopes up the base of the mountain known as Dois Irmãos, or Two Brothers". (Sneed 2003:1)

Even some places such as the PizzaLit -undoubtedly the most popular restaurant in the community, and the meeting point for either before or after parties in Rocinha-- remain open practically until the sun rises every day.

Given the limitations on physical space and the inexistence of urban planning taking into consideration its huge population, Rocinha is one of the most crowded and noisy places in the city, while lacking an adequate infrastructure (Sneed 2003:6). Data from the 2009 census shows that practically all houses have electricity, water, sewage, regular garbage pick up and nearly 90% of the houses are brick-built. However, the census also confirms that only 32% of the houses have a land telephone and 30% receive postal services. The same poll presents the lack of adequate public illumination and inadequate ventilation as two of the main problems in the community (GERJ 2009). From my own experience I have to add that the streets, sidewalks and stairs are not necessarily in the best condition, being especially dangerous when it rains or if they are located on very steep parts of the hill. To attend these and other needs, the Rio de Janeiro State has recently started to implement an urbanization project named *Proyeto de Urbanização da Rocinha*.

It also has to be pointed out that Rocinha' socioeconomic and infrastructural profile does not correspond with the average Rio's favela. Its location, history, and level of development position it among the very best. It is for this reason that in 1996 Rocinha was recognized by Rio de Janeiro State as a neighborhood or "*bairro*". Nevertheless, in the imaginary of the residents Rocinha is still a *favela* and they are often very proud to say that it is the largest and most famous one.

The architecture of Rocinha is the result of lack of urban planning and the necessity of utilizing the available space in the most efficient way. The outcome is an urban continuum that, even when not having any major physical divisions, is normally seen as divided in 24 sectors whose names have been given by the dwellers by referring to important streets or landmarks. For example, we can find sectors named as "S curve", "Street #2" or "Red Gate". This imaginary division works as a practical guide for the residents of this favela -given its size- and has been even used effectively in the last census of the community (GERJ 2009).

Rocinha's main streets ("*ruas*"), passages ("*travessas*"), and stairs ("*escadas*") constitute a network of ways that make the slum a place in which –for a newcomer– it would be very easy to get lost. Most of these have just unofficial names, only known by the residents, while lack of signs and numeration are very common. Yet this does not mean that the inhabitants of this hill (or "*morro*") are disconnected from the rest of the city. A wide variety of bus lines run through the Estrada da Gavea and the Lagoa-Barra avenues at almost any time of the day. Rocinha residents use these means of transportation to go to work and study. School-age students from the community attend numerous pre-school, primary and secondary institutions around the city (GERJ 2009: 42)

A few members of the local police (presumably paid by the traffickers as well) remain at the very bottom of the hill, doing little policing in the neighborhood and eventually stopping one or two tourist-looking people to check whether or not they were buying drugs. Instead, the local drug-traffickers, a faction called *Amigos dos Amigos*, rule the community. Since many years ago, Rocinha has been qualified as inaccessible for the police (Sneed 2003:2-3)

Indeed, the traffickers count on a very structured organization that allows them to perform their own business while maintaining the favela relatively in order. It has to be observed that the traffickers' main objective is not to fulfill the community's needs. On the contrary, they use the favelas as a sort of headquarters or *zonas francas* where they live and trade drugs, consequently, they have to be out of the influence of the police and the legal system. The idea of having the traffickers' leadership –personified in the "boss" or "chefe"– and their presence carrying guns visibly during the day and night has become a natural feature of the shantytown inhabitants' everyday life. During my stay in the community I never saw or heard any morador, young or elder, being preoccupied by seeing a group of gangsters –called bondes– heavily armed passing through their door.   As Sneed points out, a consequence of this situation is that the drug traffickers have come to be regarded by many residents as the legitimate protectors of the community, whereas the police are seen as as aggressors. This situation is evidenced in their much higher level of trust in the drug traffickers than in the police (Sneed 2003:74).

The organization of the traffickers is very stratified and the positions go from the unarmed *olheiros*, whose simple task is to inform via walkie-talkies or radios about any possible incidents, especially if another group of drug traffickers or the police is invading (Sneed 2003:46) to *soldados* or armed members of the gang, normally in charge of the security of the gang

members and of enforcing the traffickers' rules as well as to the drug trade itself. On top of them are the main leaders of the band, whose head is the *chefe*. It has to be mentioned that most of the traffickers make short careers in the organization; most of them last a few years before they die in an encounter with either the police or other gangs. However, due to the level of power and the profits from the drug trafficking, the social and economical status the gang members have in the community is pretty high compared to the average *morador*.

Given that many of the gangsters are not able to leave the slum because they are wanted men, and since for these gangsters the funk dances are one of the only options of night life their situation allows, then they organize *bailes funk* every week, which are attended by thousands of young people. According to Sneed, "the culture of funk music is one of the principal ways through which the legitimacy of the drug traffickers is produced and lived in the partially alternative social order of Rio's favelas". (Sneed 2003:47).

A reflection from this is that people familiar with the "funk culture" may want to reject the system that puts them in a situation of exclusion; it is that same system which locates them in disadvantageous positions in the formal education. On the other hand, the "alternative system" related to the trafficking has its own rules and locates their members in preferable positions in their social circles. There are certainly *pros* and *cons* in both the formal system and the alternative system and the decision the young men or woman from the *favela* take in this regard depends on their own cost-benefit analysis, given his/her particular situation. We will analyze this topic within the primary information gathered during the fieldwork.

6. Analysis of the Primary Data

6.1. Introduction

In this chapter I intend to offer a systematization and analysis of the data collected. The information provided here corresponds to the fourteen cases studied for this investigation. Given that this paper is part of a larger thesis project, I have narrowed the scope of this article. In this sense, I have postponed the inclusion of the information gathered from key informants and quotations from the interviews, all of which will be incorporated in a future version of this paper.

Before starting with the recount of the results it is necessary to restate the research question of the project:

How do young men and women from low-income families of a Brazilian favela see education as a tool for upward social mobility, and which factors have influenced their vision in this regard?

With this question in mind, I will closely follow the structure of the interviews, all designed with the aim of leading the informants from more simple facts to more complex opinions and ideas. In this way, this document will start with a general description of the profile of the respondents together with their family history and structure; this information will give us a general idea of the type of cases studied and their possible relevance for other similar populations. Secondly, I provide a report on their narrations about their lives in the *favela*. These narrations offer us vital information to have a better sense of the types of environments to which these young men and woman belong, including the social circles, the levels of contact with people from other places, and the relative exposure they have to various settings other than their own community. In a fourth section, review the youth's experiences in the

educational system. The purpose of this part is to familiarize the reader with the informants' ideas about what their experiences in the school in the past and present, and their ideas about what they expect in the future. The rationale for collecting this information is that the youngsters' past and present experiences in the educational system may predispose them, having completed the primary or secondary levels, to either continue studying or bring their studies to an end before reaching higher education. For those respondents who have any working experience, the section five describes this episode of their lives. For the others, some general questions about desires for getting a job in the future are addressed. The contact with the working world is fundamental for the scheme of this research given that the job market constitutes the institutional link between education and social mobility. In the following section I analyze the information about the youth's aspirations in life and future plans as well as the role education may have (if any) in their strategies for achieving these goals. In the seventh section the internal and external factors that influence the youngsters' strategies are explained. Sections five and six expose the center of this research as they provide answers to the first and second parts of our research question. A final section of preliminary conclusions closes this report.

6.2. Profiles of the Youth and Their Families

The cases studied in this project correspond to a group of fourteen young men and women (seven men and women respectively) between 14 and 20 years old, all of them residents of the Rocinha favela that are currently studying or have studied in the school (primary or secondary "primer or segundo grau"); in any case, even when some of them may have repeated a year or two, there are no cases in which the respondents have interrupted their studies

permanently. For this reason, given some of the characteristics of the environment where they were raised (violence, drug trafficking), and their social position near the bottom of Brazilian society, I can assert that this is a sample of the "good kids". To which degree this sampling affects the representativeness of this study can be subject to discussion, but in this project I analyze the ideas of education of the youth that continue to study or have finished the secondary, and consequently the ideas of the group of people that still have the possibility to continue studying. An alternative study of the youth that have dropped out of school may be useful to contrast, but the question of whether or not they will continue studying or what drives them towards their maintenance in school would not make much sense, in my opinion, for such a study would explain better the reasons why they renounced and took an alternative path in their lives.

In most of the cases, my informants were second generation migrants, mainly from the Northeast of Brazil. As such, following a common pattern of migration in the country, they normally have other members of the extensive family living in Rocinha (uncles, aunts, grandparents, cousins, etc) that moved before or after them, which represents a support network for the entire family. On the other hand, oftentimes the youngsters live with one of their parents, who is usually the mother, or other members of the extensive family, for many reasons that include divorce or separation, death, or abandonment.

These young men and woman are enrolled or have studied in different schools, and given that some of them have moved from other parts of the country, part of their studies may have taken place outside the city limits of Rio de Janeiro. Nonetheless, once established in Rocinha, the schools they attended are located normally in Rocinha, or in surrounding neighborhoods.

Their parents have some school education (primary or secondary), and rarely higher education (only two cases). Their occupations generally require low qualification, most of them form part of the informal sector of the economy, and in some cases are not stable jobs. Among these jobs one recurrent case is a mother that works as a maid ("*empregada domestica*"), on a daily basis, receiving a salary per worked day or "*diaria*". Still, it is important to highlight that in comparison to the mother, the fathers have in average more years of schooling than the mother and also enjoy better qualified jobs and more stability.

6.3. The Youth's Life in Rocinha

Most of my informants' lives take place within the boundaries of Rocinha; they have numerous friends, they also have boyfriends and girlfriends, some of them attend church, or take part in a variety of activities: some practice sports and participate in local tournaments, organize events to celebrate the various festivities around the year, go to parties, etc. However, they sometimes leave Rocinha. The main reason they mention is to go to school or work, but they also visit other places for a certain activity or event, when they go to the beach, etc; in any case, besides going to school/work this does not happen on a regular basis. A general assertion among them is that they say they can find everything they need in Rocinha, which given its size and the variety of services available, makes total sense.

On the other hand, depending on the case, they may have more or less contact with people from other places. As a general rule, they get to know more people from other parts of the city when they have reasons to go visit other neighborhoods. This happens mostly through the school or work when they are located out of Rocinha, through the church particularly when it has branches around the city, and in sports tournaments that take place in various settings.

Typically, youngsters that have more contact with the "outside world" are motivated by one or more of these reasons.

Besides face-to-face contact, the new technologies and the internet have created a means of virtual interaction. In this sense, many of them spend a considerable amount of time connected online to social networks, instant messaging, and email websites and programs. The most popular of the former in Brazil is -without a doubt- Orkut, whose format is similar to the well known Facebook in other countries like the United States[8]. Like Facebook, Orkut allows the user to have a detailed profile, upload and comment pictures, communicate through instant messages with people online, post public comments to other users' profiles, among other features. All these programs combine to give the youth enough options to keep them entertained while interacting with people from either Rocinha or other parts of the city, the country, or even the globe. They can find the means to get online in either their own houses (if they have internet service) or the popular internet cafes or "LAN houses", present in pretty much every corner of the *favela*. The cost for both the internet service at home and the use of a computer in a LAN house are relatively inexpensive, averaging 30 *Reals* per month for a house connection (equivalent to $15) and 1 *Real* per hour in any LAN house ($0.5). Despite the intense activity they may have online, this medium serves more to maintain the contact with people they already know but not for meeting new people. This function is especially useful for keeping in touch with friends that do not live in Rocinha and may not see (in person) very often.

When asked about the level of safety of Rocinha, they declared that feel relatively safe in Rocinha, safer than in other touristic parts of the city like Copacabana or Ipanema. This may seem contradictory to what we have mentioned about the *favelas*, what the media make public,

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[8] For more details about this website visit: www.orkut.com

and what most of *cariocas* who do not live in *favelas* (in particular those who have never visited and are not willing to visit one ever in their lives) think about the slums in Rio de Janeiro, aware of the quasi omnipresence of drug trafficking gangs within them. Rocinha is not an exception. As in most *favelas,* inside their communities there is practically no crime besides the drug trafficking activities. These include: drug commerce and consumption (oftentimes in public spaces), the use of firearms inter-gang conflicts. Less frequently, as a form of repression they execute those people who do not obey the rules set by the boss or "*chefe*" of the gang, one of which is to protect the favela inhabitants from petty robbery. The exception to the rule happens when the police "invades" the *favela*. During these occasions, my informants and other *moradores* affirm that there may be a lot of chaos, nervousness and a feeling of insecurity in Rocinha, mostly because of the stray bullets or "*balas perdidas*". Having experienced it myself in three opportunities, I also have felt at risk during these incursions. In the event of a police invasion, one of the gang members at the bottom of the hill shoots a sonorous explosive several times in order to let the inhabitants know that there is going to be an encounter with the police and therefore the residents should lock themselves in their homes for a few hours.

The Portuguese term "*favelado*" —in its most strict meaning— refers to an inhabitant of a *favela*. Nevertheless, for my informants, this word has a very strong and negative connotation which typically describes a person who does not have manners, is disrespectful, and is uneducated. Because of this, even when they have no shame and are even proud of living in Rocinha, none of them consider himself/herself a *favelado*. Instead, they prefer to use the softer term "*morador*" as an equivalent to *favela* resident, and the term "comunidade" as substitute of favela.

6.4. Experience in the Educational System

As I mentioned before, the respondents of this study who attend school do it relatively close to Rocinha. They attend either the morning or the afternoon shifts, depending on the institution and the grade level. Typically, public secondary schools offer afternoon shifts and the primary schools, morning ones. Even so, the school-days are quite short, in the sample of cases for this study they fluctuate from 3.5 to 5 hours of classes.

All of the young men and women interviewed for this study mentioned that overall they like their schools and can identify both positive and negative aspects. Among the positive characteristics, their friends are foremost. Apparently, the presence of good friends makes their stay in the school more enjoyable and relieves them from the stress of classes. Other features include the presence of good teachers, the non-academic activities related with the school such as sport tournaments, festivities, and fieldtrips. Another point I would add to this list, even when normally not mentioned in this part of the interview, is the fact that all of them consider their schools safe places, safer than Rocinha because armed people are not allowed inside.

As for negative qualities, they dislike the inappropriate behavior of some students with whom they do not identify. Although they may admit to be jokesters "bricaiões", they still respect authority. In addition, in some cases, the lack of some resources (enough computers, sports fields, etc) is something they would like to improve in their schools.

On the academic side, they tend to like the courses they find easier, which in most of the cases is what they find interesting. The most mentioned ones in this regard were Physical Education, Geography, Literature and History. On the other side, they dislike the most difficult subjects such as Math and Physics. Later in the interview, when they were asked about their future vocation, those who responded that they wanted to pursue a degree were consistent

with this rationale. All of them except one declared to have a preference for the liberal arts instead of the sciences or engineering.

The sample of informants shows many cases of repetition and "over-age". The reasons for repetition vary—some justifications they gave me were: being absent of the school (lack of wish for studying), sickness, not getting acceptance in a school due to lack of space, moving out of town, and family issues. It is not a coincidence that those with some working experience are precisely the ones who have repeated one or more years. According to them, their work did not interfere with their studies and was not the reason they repeated or stopped attending at some point, but they were working during their absence. But even when some of them repeated years, they all made clear in the interview that *they decided* to continue studying. We will see in the following sections that there are other factors that influence this decision but, ultimately, for them it is a personal choice. In fact, they recognize the existence of other paths in life, for example, getting a full time job, joining the gangs or playing sports professionally; none require them to continue their studies.

6.5. The First Contacts with the Job Market

As mentioned before, some of my informants are currently working or have worked in the past, in all the cases, in low-qualified jobs. Those who are working mostly do it before or after school and/or during the weekends. Only in one of the cases —a young man who has finished school last year— the job is performed full time; the rest of the workers work part-time or per day/hour with no regular schedule.

Those with working experience like to work. This of course does not mean that they may have had a bad experience at work or have been in a job they did not enjoy. In any case, all of them value the chance to get their own money and contribute with this to the family economy. They also recognize the opportunity their jobs give them to learn new things, not only specific skills for the job but also more general competencies like the ability to express themselves in a proper way with the costumers or to be punctual. Those with some working experience value the possibility to meet new people as well, particularly people of "higher level", defined by them as more educated, with better jobs, more experienced, and belonging to a higher social class.

In the cases analyzed those who have not worked yet happen to be the younger ones. It should be noticed that the minimum legal age to work in Brazil is sixteen, but oftentimes this rule is ignored by some employers, in particular in the informal sector. In any case, the majority of those who have not worked yet would like to do it soon. Many of them, for example, were planning to look or are already looking for summer jobs, during their vacations (December-March). In general, in their narratives, those with and without working experience link the idea of having more responsibilities with the idea of working. With this they define work as a sign of adulthood, independence, and progress in their life cycle.

The "cooler" jobs ("*empregos mais legais*") normally are related with having better salaries, having better qualifications—usually higher education degrees—or direct contact with "other people" or people of "higher level", and overall what they consider a better lifestyle. Those who have the best jobs are generally described as living and working somewhere that is not a *favela*; middle and upper-class neighborhoods generally surround the best occupations.

6.6. Aspirations in Life, Future Plans and Education

In this part of the interview I asked my informants to make the effort to imagine and describe how their lives would be ten years from now. They all answered that, in ten years, they would like to have a family, be married, and, depending on their situation, to have kids. At the same time, in ten years they also picture themselves having good jobs, the kind of jobs we were describing earlier, those who would enable them to have the lifestyle they want, including living and working in a middle or upper class neighborhood. In this exercise, even when the respondents were asked to describe how their lives would be, they ended up describing how they *would like* it to be; this shows in a certain way a positive attitude towards their future. I have to comment that, in their responses, they make references to concrete things all the time: real jobs they want to have, real places they would like to visit, live and work, real things they would like to do, and real people they would like to meet and be in touch with; this is an indication that they were not just fantasizing over a random question, but elaborating a tentative list of goals.

However, right after that question they were asked to tell me about their plans for those following ten years. I found out that that they may or may not have a defined plan for the future but all understand that accomplishing their goals is going to cost them a lot of effort and dedication. Indeed, the majority of my informants did not have a defined plan for his or her future at the moment of the interview but they had ideas concerning what they want to do in the next few years. These ideas include, sooner or later, in most of the cases (except for one), studying after the secondary.

This means that they at least have the will ("*vontade*") to study but they also realize that it may not be possible because of the cost of tuition in private schools or the difficult admission to public universities. They of course have alternatives. Some of them are thinking about

working for a certain amount of time prior to college in order to save some money to pay for an admission exam preparation course ("curso pre-vestibular") or part of their tuition. Others would consider some short course in a technical specialization that would boost their profile before entering the labor market—as a substitution for a college degree. In the eventuality of not being able to study, some of them have thought about leaving the country and look for opportunities overseas. As we can see, getting a degree may be a desire but is not a concrete and irreplaceable ingredient in the future of these youngsters.
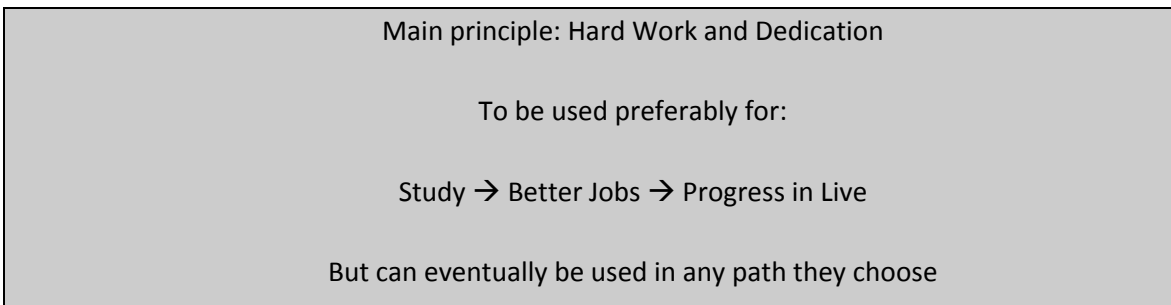
Besides the prospects for a good job in the future, they also value other aspects of being college educated. The main one is the so-called respect or prestige ("*respeto*", "*prestigio*") all college educated professionals ("*profisionais*") gain from having a degree, especially if they have graduated from prestigious fields like medicine or law, and/or from prominent institutions. As it is possible to infer, having more education means moving away from the stigma of *favelado* that the residents of the *favelas* have. According to some of my informants, an evident feature of being educated is to speak properly ("*falar certo*"), as opposed to incorrectly ("*falar errado*"), a common practice among uneducated people.

6.7. External factors in the Definition of Educational Aspirations

As I pointed out before, the decision to study after a certain point —I would venture to say the primary school— depends more on the student than anything else. Nonetheless, it is possible to identify in the narratives of my respondents two key influential factors in their decisions to study: the family and the role models.

The family is perhaps the most persuasive (or dissuasive) force in the youth's decisions about which path they might take in their lives. In the cases studied here, the family transmits, in the first place, a general ideology according to which the youth identify themselves as people from the Brazilian lower class, residents of a *favela*, with not so many economic resources but young enough to try to change that situation in their own lives. This attempt would imply a lot of work and dedication, whatever path they choose to take: live is not easy for them and to change it will not be an easy task.

On the other hand, the family also presents one of the possible alternatives as the "good one", the best one for them, or simply the one they would like their son, daughter, nephew or grandson to take. This path is a sequence that develops like a chain reaction. It starts with studies in all levels (primary, secondary and college), which would lead the person to get better jobs, which eventually would move them upwards in the social scale. Both ideas interact according to the following diagram:

Main principle: Hard Work and Dedication
To be used preferably for:
Study → Better Jobs → Progress in Live
But can eventually be used in any path they choose

Their instruction in this set of ideologies started very early in their lives, so early that they cannot remember when it began—hence the use of the word "always" ("*sempre*"): "my mom always told me to study", "my family always supported me in my plans for studying", "they always told me that studying is the only way to move forward". It is important to mention that the word "family" in their narratives refers usually to their extensive family or at least those relatives with whom they have more contact, normally those who also live in Rocinha.

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Another strong influence on the youth is their role models. These people are personal friends, family friends and are normally older and successful people who have lived in Rocinha and now have a better social status. Depending on the case, the role models may have experienced upward social mobility by means of the recipe outlined above and for that reason they constitute a living proof of its effectiveness. In a few cases in which the role models have not studied, they have achieved success, for example, in sports, or have their own business. With no exceptions, the youth describe these successful experiences as a result of hard work.

Surprisingly, there is a low influence of teachers. Although they have heard from them general statements like, "you have to study if you want to be someone in life", none of the respondents have talked to their teachers about his/her future plans. Even though they say they are good teachers, none of the youngsters named them as role models. In general, they do not build a strong relationship with them.

7. First Conclusions

7.1. The *favela* youth have internalized and envy the lifestyle of the Brazilian upper-class. Their contact with the realities outside of Rocinha, the media, and their own families' discourses about the positions these youth occupy in their society support such a process. Hence, the young men and woman from the *favelas* feel discriminated and know that they are at the bottom of the social scale, preconceptions such as the notions of *favelado* form part of this experience. This reality creates pressure on the youth and their families to move them up in the social scale.

7.2. In the *favela* context there exists the ideology of a relatively meritocratic system. This ideology creates incentives on the poor youth and their families to see education as an effective vehicle for social mobility as—in their minds—there is a clear connection between higher education degrees, access to better jobs and upward social mobility; this path is seen as a "magic formula", an opportunity. The type of education that pays off better in their minds is college, but they also value technical training as a way to improve their employability.

7.3. The family environment is the main socialization space in which this ideology is transmitted to the youth. The presence of role models as successful cases also reinforces this idea. However, even when this ideology is widely accepted, the youth realize that there are other possible paths to achieve their goals. By all means upward social mobility would imply hard work and dedication. Alternative paths that do not require academic credentials include: sports, entrepreneurship, and low-qualified jobs.

7.4. The youth's experience in school varies broadly. I found cases of good and not so good students, people who have progressed in their studies as well as others who have repeated one or more years, and students whose preferences for certain courses differ. Even when we can qualify their educational experience as positive (the main proof of that is that they are still studying) and consequently therefore assert that they trust in the effectiveness of the educational system, I believe their performance in school will eventually affect or interfere in their preferences and possibilities for acquiring higher education degrees. One hint of this is that the best students tend to have more concrete studying plans for their future and better expectations of education as vehicle for social mobility.

7.5. Besides the access it confers to better jobs, higher education also provides other benefits over people who do not have degrees. These benefits are related to the idea of "being a better person" or "gaining more respect" which goes up against the idea of being a *favelado*. These benefits, although not as important as the economic factors, also form part of the profile of the successful person the youth want to be in the future.

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GUIA DE ENTREVISTA – JOVENS

Informação básica

1. Nome

2. Idade

3. Nível educativo (ano de básica ou secundaria)

4. Nome da escola:

5. Lugar de nascimento:

6. Lugar de nascimento da mãe:

7. Lugar de nascimento do pai:

8. Nível educativo da mãe:

9. Nível educativo do pai:

Historia Familiar

10. Qual é a atividade principal (trabalho)de sua mãe? E de seu pai? Explique por favor.

11. Você mora com outros membros da sua família? Por que eles moram com você?

12. Você tem mais familiares morando em na Rocinha? Qual é sua relação com eles?

13. Quando você e sua família vieram morar na Rocinha?

14. Por que vieram morar aquí?

15. Onde você morava antes?

16. (Se não foi mencionado antes) Você e seus pais vieram de outra parte do Brasil? Onde?

17. Sua casa e alugada ou própria?

Vida na Rocinha

18. Como é o seu dia típico na Rocinha? O que você faz normalmente?

19. Você tem amigos aqui na Rocinha? Como é a sua relação com eles?

20. Você faz parte de algum grupo (esportes, igreja, serviço comunitario, etc) aqui ou fora da Rocinha? Que você faz?

21. Você tem algum passatempo (esporte, atividades extracurriculares, etc) ? Quantas vezes por semana/mês que você faz estas atividades?

22. Você tem amigos que moram fora da Rocinha? Como é a relação com eles?

23. Quanto tempo você fica na favela? Você sai da Rocinha com frequencia? Por que?

24. Além do fato de morar numa favela, o que significa ser um favelado para você?

25. Você acha que existem coisas positivas ou negativas em morar numa favela? Quais são?

26. Você considera-se um favelado? Por que sim ou não?

27. Você acha que a Rocinha é um lugar seguro para você? Explique, por favor

Experiencia educativa

28. Você está estudando atualmente? O que? onde?

29. Você gosta da sua escola? Por que sim ou não?

30. Na sua opinião, quais são as coisas positivas ou negativas de sua escola?

31. Que aulas você gosta mais ou menos? Por que?

32. O que voce faz nessas aulas?

33. Você acha que é um bom estudante? Por que?

34. Alguma vez você teve problemas com seus estudos na escola? (perguntar sobre baixo rendimento ou repetência) Alguma vez você parou de estudar? Por que?

35. Por que você acha que algumas pessoas deixam de ir à escola/ param de estudar? Alguma vez você pensou nesta possibilidade? Explique por favor.

36. Como é a relação com seus colegas de turma? Eles também moram na Rocinha?

37. Você acha que a escola e um lugar seguro para você? Você acha que a escola é mais segura que as ruas da Rocinha ou acha que é menos segura?

38. Por que você acha que seus pais te matricularam nessa escola? (explorar: proximidade, preço, qualidade, etc)

Experiencia Laboral

39. Você está trabalhando agora? Se sim, o que você faz? Quantas horas por dia/por semana?

40. Seu trabalho interfere em seus estudos de alguma forma?

41. Se não esta trabalhando, alguma vez você já trabalhou? O que você fazia? Quanto tempo?

42. Seu trabalho interferia em seus estudos de alguma forma?

43. Como conseguiu arrumar seu atual emprego ou seus empregos passados?

44. Você gosta / gostava de trabalhar lá?

45. Por que você quis arrumar um emprego? Você tinha alguma razão importante?

46. O que seus pais pensam de você trabalhar? Eles influenciaram na sua decisão?

47. Você tem aprendido coisas novas no seu trabalho?

Aspirações de vida – planos futuros

48. Como você acha que será a sua vida daqui a dez anos? Explique por favor. Onde você vai morar? Como vai ser o seu trabalho? O que você já vai ter conseguido/feito. Você acha que já vai ter uma família?

49. Qual é o seu trabalho ideal? Descreva com detalhes, por favor. O que você faz? Qual é o salário/benefícios? Onde é o trabalho (na cidade)? Como você se veste para trabalhar? Quem são seus colegas? Que responsabilidades você tem?

50. Onde você gostaria de morar em dez anos? Por que lá?

51. O que você acha que tem que fazer para conquistar esse objetivo?

52. Você tem algum plano para os próximos dez anos? Quais são seus planos? (explorar: família, trabalho, educação, viajens, sair do país)

Relacões entre os planos futuros e estudo

53. (Se não se mencionou antes) Você tem planos de continuar seus estudos? Se sim, o que você quer estudar? Quando? Onde? (universidade, cursinho, etc)

54. Por que você quer continuar estudando? Você acha que o estudo te ajudaria a conseguir um emprego melhor?

55. Você acha que o fato de ser estudante o de ter um diploma te traz beneficios sobre outras pessoas que não estudaram? Que benefícios são esses? (Explorar prestígio social 'respeito', redes sociais, etc)

Fatores externos nas aspirações educativas

56. Tem alguém que você conhece que você considera um exemplo para seguir na sua vida? Por que? Com que frequencia você encontra ou conversa com essa pessoa?

57. Você acha que essa pessoa influência na sua vida?

58. Você já falou com ele/ela sobre seus planos futuros?

59. Você já falou com com ele/ela sobre seus planos de estudo?

60. Seus pais sabem dos seus planos para o futuro? O Que eles acham? Eles concordam?

61. Você fala com seus amigos sobre seus planos para o futuro? O Que eles acham? Seus planos são parecidos ou diferentes com os dos seus amigos?

62. Você fala com seus professores sobre seus planos para o futuro? O Que eles acham? Eles te dão algum conselho?

Gênero

63. Você acha que o fato de ser uma mulher/homem tem influência nas posibilidades de estudar mais ou conseguir una melhor educação? Por que?

64. Você acha que o fato de ser uma mulher/homem influencia na hora de conseguir um emprego? Por que?

65. Você acha que o fato de ser uma mulher/homem tem influência nas posibilidades de participar em atividades sociais ou comunitárias (clubes, esportes, diferentes tipos de organizações, etc)

66. Você acha que o fato de ser uma mulher/homem tem influência nas posibilidades de ser exitoso na vida?

67. Você conhece alguma historia específica de algém que tenha sido discriminada por ser mulher/homem em alguma dessas situações que conversamos? (educação, trabalho, participação)

68. Alguma vez você se sentiu descriminado? Quando?

Raça

69. O Que significa racismo para você?

70. Você acha que existe racismo no Brasil? Por que?

71. Você acha que existe racismo na Rocinha? Como? Você acha que tem mais racismo dentro ou fora da favela?

72. Algumas pessoas dão apelidos para outras por causa de alguma característica física diferente que ela tem, e esses apelidos normalmente estão associados com a "raça" das pessoas.. Por exemplo, algumas pessoas dizem que eu sou "moreno". De que "raça" você se considera?

73. Você acha que o fato de ser (repetir a mesma palavra) pode interferir nas suas possibilidades de conseguir uma melhor educação?

74. Você acha que o fato de ser (repetir a mesma palavra) pode interferir nas suas possibilidades de conseguir um emprego melhor ?

75. Você acha que o fato de ser (repetir a mesma palavra) pode interferir nas suas possibilidades de ter sucesso na vida?

76. Você gostaria de acrescentar mais alguma coisa sobre algum tema que conversamos na entrevista?

INDIANA UNIVERSITY BLOOMINGTON

ACORDO PARA PARTICIPAR EM UMA PESQUISA

Percepções da educação para a mobilidade social. Um estudo de caso sobre uma favela brasileira

Pede-se para você tomar parte em uma pesquisa acerca das percepções dos jovens sobre a educação para o progresso deles na vida. Você foi convidado para participar neste estudo porque você tem o perfil adequado para este estudo. Por favor, leia o formulário e fale com o pesquisador sobre qualquer pergunta que você possa ter.

Este estudo está sendo dirigido por Jorge Valenzuela, estudante de pos-graduação na Universidade de Indiana e pesquisador visitante no Instituto Dois Irmãos. O estudo é parcialmente financiado pelos Tinker Summer Research Grants.

PROPÓSITO DO ESTUDO

O propósito deste estudo é examinar as atitudes dos jovens quanto a educação depois do ensino médio e as percepções deles quanto ao papel da educação superior no futuro deles.

NÚMERO DE PESSOAS FAZENDO PARTE DO ESTUDO:

Se você decidir participar, você será um dos vinte sujeitos que serão entrevistados neste estudo.

OS PROCEDIMENTOS PARA ESTE ESTUDO:

Se você decidir participar, você fará o seguinte:

Terá uma entrevista com o pesquisador com duração de aproximadamente uma hora, só uma vez.

RISCOS DE PARTICIAR NESTE ESTUDO:

Durante este estudo, o maior risco está relacionado com a possibilidade da perda da confidencialidade. Para reduzir este risco o pequisador mantera seu nome e qualquer outra forma de identificação em segredo e não aparecerá em nenhuma publicação do estudo.

BENEFICIOS DE PARTICIAR NESTE ESTUDO:

Os possíveis benefícios da sua participação são que durante as entrevistas os sujeitos terão a oportunidade de refletir sobre as metas pessoais e planos futuros.

ALTERNATIVAS A FAZER PARTE DO ESTUDO:
Uma alternativa a fazer parte do estudo é não participar; você pode desistir de participar a qualquer altura.

CONFIDENCIALIDADE

Tentar-se-a manter a sua informação pessoal como confidencial. Não podemos garantir confidencialidade absoluta. Sua informação pessoal pode ser compartilhada se for requerida pela lei. Sua identidade sera mantida em segredo nas possíveis publicações do estudo.

As organizações que podem revisar ou copiar seus dados da pesquisa para o análise incluem grupos como o pesquisador e seus associados, a Universidade de Indiana, e o patrocinador do estudo, Tinker Summer Research Grants, e organizações estaduais, especificamente o OHRP.

CUSTOS

Fazer parte deste estudo não tera nenhum custo adicional para você.

PAGAMENTO

Vocé não receberá nenhum pagamento para participar neste estudo.

CONTACTO PARA PERGUNTAS OU PROBLEMAS

Se você tiver perguntas sobre o estudo ou algum dos riscos, contate Jorge Valenzuela no telefone 8320-4088. Também pode contatar o escritorio de IUB Human Subjects, 530 E Kirkwood Ave, Carmichael Center, L03, Bloomington, IN 47408, 812-340-3067 ou via email: iub_hsc@indiana.edu

NATUREZA VOLUNTARIA DO ESTUDO

Fazer parte deste estudo é voluntário. Você pode escolher não tomar parte ou pode deixar o estudo a qualquer altura. Abandonar o estudo não resultará em qualquer penalidade ou perda de benefícios para os quais você está intitulado. Sua decisão não afetará suas relacões presentes ou futuras com o pesquisador.

CONSENTIMENTO DO SUJEITO

Considerando todo o descrito anteriormente, eu concordo em participar nesta pesquisa.

Será entregue uma copia deste documento para meus arquivos.

Nome do sujeito:

Assinatura do sujeito: **Data**:

(A ser preenchido pelo sujeito)

Se tiver menos de 18anos:

Nome do pai ou mãe:

Assinatura do pai ou mãe: **Data**:

(A ser preenchido pelos pais)

Nome do pesquisador:

Assinatura do pesquisador: **Data**: