



**Master's Thesis by**  
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# **Rolling with the punches**

**Boxing as a means to social inclusion**



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I dedicate this thesis to my beloved grandmother, who always took great pride in the written word and loved to explore the world around her.

# Acronyms

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CUFA	Central Única das Favelas
EBRG	Escola de Boxe Raff Giglio
LIE	Lei ao Incentivo de Esporte
LPP	Luta Pela Paz
NDM	Nós do Morro
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
UN	United Nations

# Glossary

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Academia	Gym; the Portuguese term is applied here to signal that the projects function as more than places of workout
Aluno	Student
Asfalto	Asphalt; used to designate the asphalted or “regulated” parts of the city; antonym to <i>favela</i> and <i>morro</i>
Bairro	Neighbourhood; district
Bandido	Bandit; thug; gangster
Bolsa	Bursary
Bolsista	Bursar; <i>aluno</i> who has been given a <i>bolsa</i>
Briga	Wrangle; scuffle; refers to (unregulated) fighting in e.g. the street
Carioca	Adjective referring to the city of Rio de Janeiro, e.g. the inhabitants of Rio de Janeiro are called <i>os Cariocas</i>
Cidadania	Citizenship
Comando	Army unit; used as slang for drug-trafficking gangs
Competidor	Competitive pugilist
Comunidade	Community
Facção	Faction; refers to a faction of a drug-trafficking gang
Favela	Slum; shanty town; informal, unregulated settlement
Favelado	<i>Favela</i> dweller; often used (attributed) derogatory
Jogo	Game; play
Luta	Fight; struggle; refers to a regulated boxing fight
Lutador	Fighter; pugilist
Malandro	Player; rascal; scoundrel
Menino	Boy; used affectionately about the <i>alunos</i> at EBRG
Morador	Inhabitant; resident; dweller; tenant
Morro	Hill; also signifies the “informal” or “unregulated” settlements, or <i>favelas</i> , situated on the hillsides
Professor	Professor; teacher; instructor; refers to boxing coach
Tráfico (de drogas)	Drug trade
Traficante (de drogas)	Drug dealer
Zona Norte	North Zone of the city of Rio de Janeiro
Zona Sul	South Zone of the city of Rio de Janeiro

## Danish summary

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Dette speciale handler ikke så meget om sport som om sportsbaserede indsatser til at imødekomme marginalisering – det handler om sportens inkluderende evne. Med afsæt i to projekter, som tilbyder gratis boksetræning, søger dette speciale at afdække, hvad sportsbaserede tiltag kan tilbyde med hensyn til social inklusion af unge mennesker, som vokser op i en brasiliansk favela (slumby) i Rio de Janeiro, Brasilien. Favelaer er ofte marginaliserede rum, der er præget af en høj grad af turbulens som følge af social ulighed og vold, mens befolkningen regelmæssigt bliver stigmatiseret som følge af fordomme i det såkaldt “regulerede samfund”. Unge mennesker i favelaerne befinder sig derfor ofte i et socialt moratorium, hvor de står overfor store udfordringer i forhold til at blive til noget eller nogen. Med afsæt i denne knebne situation undersøger specialet, hvordan de unge mennesker potentielt kan optimere deres muligheder og derigennem indvirke positivt på deres situation og realisere dem selv.

Analysen tager afsæt i et antal optikker: Sport som socialt virkemiddel, social kapital som en ressource samt social identitet med vægt på positionering og social navigation. Udover at have det ‘sociale’ tilfælles giver de alle giver et bud på, hvordan marginalisering kan imødegås, og den individuelle agent kan indregne sig selv. Skæringspunktet mellem optikkerne indikerer, at unge mennesker kan agere taktisk for at optimere deres ressourcer og muligheder. En sådan taktik er netop sportsdeltagelsen, hvorigennem social kapital kan skabes og transformeres. Således påviser specialet relevansen af sportsbaserede projekter for ens sociale identitet og navigation i oprørte farvande.

Den praktiske navigation, der finder sted i forbindelse med deltagelsen i sportsprojekterne, kan dog kun øge den produktive sociale kapital, hvis nogle fundamentale præmisser er til stede; herunder skal sportsprojektet have en vis kvalitet samt et overordnet mål med indsatsen. Desuden kommer specialet frem til en række faktorer, som påvirker udfaldet af den sportsbaserede indsats. Blandt disse er selvrespekt og respekt for andre, sports- såvel som sociale regler og positive rollemodeller. Disse elementer udgør både en del af den sociale kapital, som dannes i kraft af sportsprojekterne, og pejlemærker for de unge menneskers navigation i forsøget på at blive til noget.

# 1 Introduction

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## 1.1 From the beautiful game to the noble art

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Sport has been attributed many positive as well as negative features in the course of history and in the most optimistic accounts, sport is argued to contribute to building peace and generating social cohesion. Keeping in mind that “the term [social] is generally invoked to suggest a commitment to the broader welfare of society” (Jarvie 2008: 94), the underlying premise for putting sport on the social agenda is a functionalist understanding of sport as a template for social interaction and, thus, as a relevant instrument to impact on the identity and opportunities of the individual.

When talking about sport in Brazil, one sport trumps the rest: Football. While there is increasing emphasis on using football for “development and peace”, other sports, notably so-called individual sports, have to some extent been disregarded. The fact, however, remains that whether individual or team based, sport contributes to the establishment and consolidation of social relations. When pursuing a sport actively, as participants and not mere spectators, people meet and engage – formally as well as informally. The crux is whether the sport is organised and targeted or not because it is “sporting organizations (rather than 'sport') [that] have the potential to play an important role in civil society” (Coalter 2007: 5).

“Boxing, through its sympathy for children and adolescents from lower social classes, has an advantage over other sports in the influence that it may exert on the behaviour of these youths... Boxing, also called the noble art, has proven itself as one of the most effective sports when forming the character of man. This is mainly so because it reaches people from the poorest strata of society.”<sup>1</sup>

My endeavour was never one of mastering this noble art, or ‘sweet science’ (cf. Wacquant 2004), but rather one of investigating the possibilities and obstacles that lie with using boxing as an instrument for social good. Departing from two organisations in Rio de Janeiro<sup>2</sup> which implement sports activities with a view to empowering – physically and socially – children, adolescents and young people, the cases will serve as examples of how sport can be applied in social work and their specific approaches will be investigated in order to consider relevant themes and concepts. The

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.projeto boxevidigal.xpg.com.br/3.html>

<sup>2</sup> This thesis involves two cases in the city of Rio de Janeiro and will, consequently, depart solely from the actualities of the state of Rio de Janeiro. This is not just due to Brazil being an enormous and highly diverse country, but also due to its configuration as a Federal Republic, meaning that the various states may implement divergent policies and strategies in order to deal with social problems.

objective is to establish whether and how the participants' opportunity for inclusion in mainstream *Carioca* society may be affected by these boxing projects.

*Esporte social*, literally 'social sport', refers to such conscious application of sport in order to achieve social objectives. Sport for social good projects are not mere sports associations, but rather constitute sports-based initiatives that work toward a broader goal, such as social inclusion, through the means of sports.

This thesis departs from two such projects that offer boxing classes for free. Departing from the cases, the objective is to investigate concepts of marginalisation, social capital and identity with the aim of elucidating the practical benefits of sports-based social projects in addition to providing the theorisation of whether and how sport may contribute to social inclusion with empirical backbone. The subject is not about sport *per se* but, rather, about sports-based strategies to overcome marginalisation and self-depreciation – it is about the power of sport to further inclusion and self-esteem.

The premise is that sport is a social and rule-based activity and as such may function as an instrument for navigating in a society. Participation in sport – and particularly in a specific sport – has long been a means of identification (Mangan & Ritchie 2004; Bourdieu 1986a). From this follows that sports participation may be a way to position oneself, that is, a way of optimising and influencing one's situation.

The title of this thesis, 'Rolling with the punches', stems from a metaphor derived from boxing jargon. It refers to the way a fighter moves with the opponent's punch, i.e. stepping back or to the side, and, while still getting hit, avoiding the full impact of the blow. The title, thus, alludes to the continuous process of adaptation to a changing reality.

## 1.2 Thesis statement

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The thesis statement is as follows:

*What is the relevance of sports-based projects with regards to forming social capital and affecting the participants' social inclusion?*

The thesis statement will be examined through the following research questions:

- How can social capital be formed and reformed through participation in sport?

- What is the relevance of doing sport to social identity?
- What is the perceived relevance of social navigation in a context of marginality?

### 1.3 Purpose and delimitation

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While much has been written on the potential of sport as a tool for development, community-building and social integration, the bulk has focused on so-called team sports, especially football. Given football's all-pervading nature and popularity, this is understandable as football constitutes a formidable resource in holistic efforts to, *inter alia*, create fertile ground for conflict transformation (Kristensen 2007). That most attention has been directed at team sports is also due to the potential output of a collective effort; specifically the opportunities offered for working together towards a common goal (Right to Play 2008). One should, however, not disregard the potential of non-team sports when it comes to social inclusion as the decisive factor is quality – in the planning and execution of the sport activities. Departing from two projects based on boxing activities surely runs against the trend, not least because of the reputation carried by boxing for being individualistic and violent and, thus, usually not perceived to be a socially beneficial sport. As will be demonstrated, however, boxing does carry a very real social potential as a means to engage and include people in specific circumstances.

When investigating sport for social good there is often a schism between academics trying to *understand* the workings and the policy makers seeking a knowledge of what works or “what can be *shown* to work” (Read & Bingham 2009: xvii, emphasis in original). This is certainly one of the reasons for the popularity of the notion of social capital in the area; however one should remember that the conceptualisation and delivery of projects is just as, if not more, important than measuring the outcomes (ibid: xviii).

The objective of this thesis is not to exhaust the topics of social capital and social inclusion, but rather to reflect upon the relevance and instrumentality of two specific boxing-based initiatives and make assumptions regarding their best practices and shortcomings. The practical ambition is to contribute to empirical evidence-building while the theoretical ambition is to seek (an empirical) relation between sport and social capital and identity. The premise is that the boxing training comprises a type of social template; a way of furthering social identity and inclusion. As such, it is relevant to investigate whether the cases contribute to constituting the participants as confident individuals who obtain and enhance their prospects for participation and self-reliability.

It must be stressed that participation is a broader notion than simply playing sports and can include various forms of engagement in sporting practices, including facilitating and watching

(Nicholson & Hoye 2008: 11). In the present analysis, for the purpose of delimitation, the point of departure is solely the participants, i.e. the *alunos* and team members involved at the *academias*.

Focus is not on the sports dimension as much as it is on processes of inclusion and identity. The two projects and their activities constitute cases which use boxing as a means to attract participants and provide them with positive and meaningful experiences; their approach is one of establishing sport as an instrument for social and personal development. The projects constitute cases which apply sport, amateur boxing, with the aim of developing skills and encouraging pro-social behaviour in order to further social inclusion.

The central hypothesis put forward is that a targeted sports-based project can influence on the social inclusion of the participants in a complex and volatile context. In relation to this, it is argued that sport may contribute to the transformation of social capital.

## 1.4 Organisation of the thesis

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The thesis is organised as follows:

Chapter 2 accounts for the applied methods with regards to data collection and outlines the practical deliberations and challenges in the field.

Chapter 3 introduces the field: The cases and the communities in which they are located.

Chapter 4 is a context chapter that presents the reality in which the two projects exist in order to clarify the problem and further serves as an introduction to the concept of marginality.

Chapter 5 is the analytical frame, which outlines the notion of sport for social good in addition to the key concepts of social capital, social identity and social navigation.

Chapter 6-8 constitute the analysis which departs from the problem statement and research questions and *inter alia* investigates the practical workings of the *academias* in order to determine whether and how they may affect the social inclusion of the participants.

Chapter 9 concludes on the findings.

## 2 Methodological deliberations

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### 2.1 The empirical field: Delimitation and qualification

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The data was collected during four months of fieldwork in the city of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, using the before mentioned two cases as points of departure. The cases are essentially sports projects with the objective of forming athletes but simultaneously apply sport as a framework in which social integration, including prevention of crime and violence and increasing possibilities for work and study, can be furthered. Unforeseen occurrences seem to be the rule when conducting fieldwork, hence extensive flexibility with regards to methods, strategies and theories is required (Hastrup 2003: 403). Consequently, I did some rolling with the punches of my own during the data collection; in the very beginning because the primary organisation that I had arranged to use as a case prior to arriving in Rio de Janeiro ended up falling through, but also because reality intruded in such a way that it was impossible to access one of the cases whenever I wanted to.

### 2.2 Methods: Compilation of data

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Methodologically, the starting point was a literature review, i.e. going over the relevant material on 'sport for social good' in addition to an overview of the specific contexts in which sport may be applied. Having established and contextualized a topical knowledge, contact was sought with persons and organisations of interest. A desk review which included relevant documents, including evaluations, reports, news items, project descriptions and web page contents, established a fundamental, if somewhat sketchy, insight that together with the literature review formed the basis of the preliminary research questions.

Using qualitative methods for compiling data, most empirical data has been established through semi-structured and unstructured interviews. Informants include project managers, coaches and participants in addition to key informants with relevant knowledge of e.g. the context and challenges. Additional data was collected by means of participant observations during course work, training, etc., and through project documentation including background studies, annual reports and evaluations. Contact was established to other organisations, some in other *favelas*, with the purpose of interviewing key informants in order to get a broader understanding of the reality, including everyday life and challenges of being young in the *favela*, access to organised sport etc. The observations and interviews complemented each other and I proceeded in an overall 'iterative-inductive manner' (O'Reilly 2005). The process of gathering empirical data, creating insight,

formulating hypotheses and establishing a conceptual framework was highly flexible and, thus, moved “steadily forward yet forward and back at the same time” (ibid.: 27).

Unleashing at least a part of the fieldwork, and data collection in general, is recommended to allow for investigating facets and themes that, sometimes unexpectedly, arise (Olwig 2002: 121). Accordingly, I interacted with the people I encountered without any expectation of constantly gathering data of relevance to my problem statement but rather to increase my engagement, thus maybe running the risk of becoming subjective, if not normative, but also increasing the possibility of making a relevant analysis.

Through triangulation, by applying various methods, I sought out my data in several sources, both related and unrelated to the cases. I continuously made sure to incorporate observed practices into the interviews in order to substantiate the impressions that I had gotten. This was in hopes of preventing any overly normative interpretations and to allow for conclusions based in facts.

Interviews and observations were first undertaken at EBRG. Contact was established after reading about the objectives on the website, e.g. keeping young people off the street and away from the *tráfico* (drug trade). After identifying EBRG mostly as a “sports-oriented” project, I turned my focus to LPP due to its holistic approach to using sport in an integrated effort to subvert social exclusion and advanced marginality (cf. Wacquant 2007).

## 2.2.1 Participant observation

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Participant observation seems to be an oxymoron in that participation entails getting involved subjectively, while observation implies an objective detachment (O'Reilly 2005: 102f). It is a valuable ethnographic method that designates the systematic use of information gained from participating in and observing activities in a specific field (Dewalt et al. 1998: 259). It is useful to observe actions, behaviours, discourses and attitudes as these play out in a given field. Therefore, this method played a central role in gaining insight in the daily operations and the practical workings of the two projects. The participant observation was often undertaken in an active manner as a measure of interaction was always present in the sense that I was open to engage with the people present, asking as well as answering questions.

Visiting the two *academias* and talking to people as well as observing activities was permitted by the persons-in-charge at both projects.<sup>3</sup> I was always very open with regards to my research and my person. *Alunos* and team members seemed interested in my presence, although many people at

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<sup>3</sup> Permissions were given by the director of EBRG, Mr. Raff Giglio, and the Project Manager at LPP, Ms. Juliana Tibau.

LPP were rather used to having visitors – the rule “to receive people from outside the gym with respect and kindness” is even on prominent display in LPP’s gym. Consequently, participant observations were easily conducted and the events that unfolded were taken to be representative of the daily operations and occurrences at both *academias* as the discipline and respect exercised simply does not allow for the *alunos* feigning.

I did not immerse myself fully in the sense that I participated in the actual boxing training. Much ethnography on the subject of boxing involves the researcher as active participant (cf. Wacquant 2004), as such a process of learning on your own body may provide a deeper understanding of the lived practice, but as my objective was to investigate how the projects might contribute to social inclusion, I deemed it more important to observe the participants during e.g. classes and converse with them during and after class. My gender played a significant role as EBRG excludes females from the classes and I therefore could not take active part in the boxing classes. At LPP I was invited to take part in classes but I chose not to as I wanted to keep a similar research strategy in both cases. This does not take anything from the method as genuine or complete participation does not “necessarily access a more authentic 'truth' than observing and interviewing.” (Woodward 2008: 551; Bryman 2004: 301).

### 2.2.2 Conversations: Semi-structured interviews and informal talks

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Conducting interviews and engaging in conversations is perhaps the most important strategy to generate insight and take on ever-developing hypotheses, but more importantly it is the fundamental method to include the participants' experiences and views and to investigate the workings of the projects as well as the impact they have. Referring to the interviews as conversations captures the flexible form in which data was collected: Some were semi-structured and had most often been scheduled in advance while others were informal and unplanned and several arose from just “hanging out” – by placing myself “naturally” in situations in which conversations could easily be struck (Woodward 2008; Dewalt et al. 1998: 261). Even when conducting semi-structured interviews, I allowed for unstructured questioning which resulted in an aura of informality during the interview, thus producing “conversations” (Bryman 2004). Such a conversational and “looser” form provided room for reflection on what works and why.

I drafted an interview guide and continuously revised it in order to include new themes and questions that arose during the data collection. Furthermore, the interview guide was adjusted to the various informants in terms of age and position in the projects. It served its purpose of guiding; however, as mentioned, the interview process remained open and flexible in order to stray away from given topics and follow the twists and turns that the interviews might take.

### 2.2.3 Project documentation and other relevant material

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Further data stems from project documentation; including project descriptions, evaluations, reports, articles and online tools. The bulk of the project documentation mainly pertains to LPP and consists of yearly evaluations, an annual report and a methodology presentation. A recent evaluation of EBRG has been prepared by independent researchers at the behest of EBRG's main sponsor. Although, it can be argued that project documentation is generally drafted in order to substantiate subjective claims and thus involves a degree of bias, I believe the input to be relevant and non-controversial for the purpose at hand as the material is applied mainly as background material. As such, it is considered “authentic and meaningful” although this by no means should be taken to suggest a complacent employment (Bryman2004: 387).

In addition, news items and other articles have been included to gain further knowledge of events, contexts and other relevant aspects.

## 2.3 In the field – practicalities and challenges

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Substantial planning is essential prior to entering the field, but much depends on contingencies and luck. Unforeseen situations often arise forcing the researcher to accommodate the fieldwork. I will now turn to some of the considerations and adaptations that I went through.

### 2.3.1 Access

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The first important step in any fieldwork is to obtain access to the case and to the relevant informants and such access must often be negotiated through the appropriate 'gatekeepers'. Some compare the notion of gatekeeper to that of a “fairy godmother” that assists with introductions and getting to know how things work (O'Reilly 2005: 90f.); however the gatekeeper may just as easily hinder access. At both projects, the daily managers acted as *positive* gatekeepers in the sense that they allowed free access to the *academias*, *alunos* and team members in addition to providing names of other interesting informants in the community. With this seal of approval from the managers, the gates seemed wide open. Furthermore, coaches as well as students at both projects readily provided introductions and access to additional informants.

The specific predicament of many *favelas* is such that many outsiders abstain from entering, especially if they do not have any business in the area. While EBRG is situated at the bottom of the *morro* and technically outside the actual *favela*, LPP was situated some 600 metres into the

complex, which meant that access could only happen by potentially passing guards from the local *facção*. The sight of arms – mostly semi-automatic AK-47s or AR-15s – was not uncommon, however I did not feel threatened as the *facções* had no interest in me and, quite possibly, quickly realised that I came to visit LPP. Nonetheless, the project manager at LPP insisted that I always called in advance to check that the situation was calm.<sup>4</sup> On a few occasions, a planned visit was postponed and once an interview was interrupted because the police arrived and the atmosphere in the community turned tense and I was encouraged to leave as it might become “unpleasant to leave later”. On two visits, I was escorted out of Maré by team members from LPP after finishing my interviews for the day. This was a precaution because the situation could escalate and it would be good to be in company of faces familiar to the community – and that I was not.

My gender did not influence on gaining access. I did not feel hampered nor did I benefit from being female. I definitely did not feel that it was additionally dangerous to enter the communities as a female – perhaps on the contrary: I did not look like a snitch or a member of the police or a rival gang and I therefore presented no perceivable threat. I am, however, certain that I was watched and that the powers that be were fully aware of my entering and leaving. I was never stopped nor questioned by anyone in the communities about my intentions – most likely because I always went directly to the *academias*. The only time I was questioned about the reasons for my presence was by police officers.

### 2.3.2 Informants

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Interviews were conducted with the director, coaches and students at EBRG and with the project manager, youth workers, students and boxing coach at LPP. In addition, interviews were carried out with community stakeholders, in order to learn more about the communities and project contexts. With regard to citation, informants who are participants in the projects are identified by title only, e.g. “*aluno*” or “team member”; some are identified by several titles, e.g. “*aluna* and youth leader” in order to stress how participants may gain various positions in the projects. The omission of names is not due to any perceived controversy but is simply a matter of keeping the anonymity in addition to keeping the focus on the problem statement as opposed to “evaluating” the projects. Every informant from the two projects, apart from the directors, is considered to be a participant in the very project and is as such included in the analysis and conclusions made. This is so because the majority of people involved are from the communities in question and some of them would not be who and what they are today if it had not been for the projects.

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<sup>4</sup> A few visits were cancelled as the tensions were running high in the community. There were two underlying reasons for this: Firstly, due to rival criminal factions fighting for control of territory, and secondly due to police incursions into the *favela*.

The *alunos* interviewed are all preteens or teenagers, while the team members are teenagers or young people. Only males were interviewed at EBRG, whereas both female and male informants participated at LPP. Conducting fieldwork among children and young people may lead to unique opportunities and dilemmas for what reason some researchers opt out of interviewing such young informants and rely on, for instance, participant observation (Eder & Fingerson 2003: 33). Without giving voice to the primary participants themselves, this undertaking would be futile in its effort to include “the stakeholders’ perceptions on the subject” (NSD 2009: 10). My objective has clearly been to allow the participants to give voice to the challenges and benefits as they experience them.

Some informants are considered key as they served the research in a particularly constructive manner, e.g. by directing me to further informants, institutions and events (Bryman 2004: 300). I commenced by talking to the director and project manager, respectively, at the two projects in order to start off with the “right person” in terms of gaining access and fundamental insight into the contexts and projects as well as identifying themes and problems to be addressed.

Finally, interviews were also conducted with community resource persons, some of whom also acted as key or “encultured” informants, i.e. informants with a profound grasp of their specific community and its history and culture, (O’Reilly 2005: 42), in order to get to know the communities without relying solely on articles and publications. When citing informants who fall into the latter two categories, I state their full name in addition to organisation.

### 2.3.3 The interview setting

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Primary interviews were undertaken at a number of different localities: first and foremost at the two projects, secondly at local organisation headquarters and in a few instances in the private homes of relevant informants. The principal locations were the two cases, the sites to which the problem statement was attached. This made for a natural and neutral meeting ground at which the informants, including the youngest ones, felt comfortable.

The primary interviews were semi-structured and consisted of open-ended questions that left room open for elaboration and change of subject. Secondary interviews had the character of conversations and mainly took place in relation to other activities, including participant observation at training sessions, which meant that other persons were sometimes present. Such “companions” may potentially influence the interview; on one hand the informant may not answer openly or honestly as he/she may not want to offer, for instance, criticism in front of others, and on the other hand the informant may feel more comfortable with familiar people around and thus

engage in the conversation more freely. In retrospect, the quality and output of the interviews do not seem relative to the interview setting; there is, therefore, no perceivable divergence between the expressions, verbal or otherwise, and perceptions conveyed in “closed” and “open” settings, respectively.

Informal talks took place at the project sites as well as other locations. Every single informant was approached in a manner so as to allow him or her to decide to be interviewed. Formal interviews sometimes presented a challenge since many of the involved persons did not have a lot of time and some seemed slightly reluctant when asked to sit down for an interview. Once the interview started, however, every informant answered with eagerness and several were surprised when finding out how quickly time passed. The majority of planned interviews were conducted on a one-on-one basis; however a number of interviews were conducted with two persons simultaneously.

#### 2.3.4 Ethical considerations

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When interviewing young people, certain aspects must be considered, including seeking permission from the guardian or person-in-charge and considering how the interview situation may impact them. Permission to talk to the *alunos* was always acquired with the responsible adult, most often the coach in charge of the class they were enrolled in, i.e. an adult who was highly familiar with the particular person. The interviews furthermore took place at the project sites; in the vicinity of the responsible adult but generally without any interference.

The potential of power inequalities increases when interviewing children. I was continuously aware of my position as an adult and careful to give “something in return” to the informants, e.g. in the form of encouraging them to ask me any questions that they would like (Eder & Fingerson 2003: 37f). Younger people may be more susceptible to leading questions, so I was conscious of how I posed questions and attempted to only use open-ended questions while also keeping an encouraging tone when talking to shy or insecure persons. My objective throughout was to allow the informants to use their own words.

#### 2.3.5 Language and translation

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All interviews and talks were conducted in Portuguese since all informants spoke little or no English. I spoke the language prior to the fieldwork, however not at an academic level. The language posed only few obstacles, which could generally be defused by rephrasing a question or a comment. The informants were generally talkative and at times spoke very fast, but they were also

very patient when it came to communicating with a non-native speaker. Having previously spent time in Rio de Janeiro, I was also familiar with common idioms, expressions as well as knowledgeable of boxing terminology.

The language slightly influenced the data collection process, and more specifically the interviews. When interviewing children and younger persons, doing group interviews may create a more natural interview setting (Eder & Fingerson 2003: 34); however, I chose not to interview more than two persons simultaneously in order to make sure that I could confidently follow the conversation; I wanted to avoid people not waiting for “their turn” and talking at the same time and to allow room for reflection during the conversation. A positive aspect of speaking Portuguese at a non-academic level was that the interview situation stayed informal – and in some instances it acted as an ice-breaker with informants and certainly deflected any risk of the power inequality.

A final important note to comment on with regards to language is that I have translated all quotations and Portuguese literature and they are not specifically marked as translations in the text.

### 2.3.6 Positions in the field

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As a European, adult female researcher, I somewhat stood out in the field. Being mindful of this, I generally interacted with every person that I encountered with an open attitude in order to demystify myself as much as possible. As mentioned earlier, the participants at LPP are generally used to having visitors and after a few visits they did not seem to pay particular attention to my presence. The situation was slightly different at EBRG because there are no females involved, not as participants or as organisers, however after paying several visits I was often recognised and greeted by the *alunos* and coaches. This is not to say that I did not protrude; for instance, I noticed how some of the youngest participants, when noticing my arrival, seemed to work additionally hard at boxing class.

My position as a *gringa*, (a foreigner) was also palpable. Being a *gringa* is not about race as much as about language and a blatant position as stranger. Being able to communicate in Portuguese certainly mitigated this position, as did my open acknowledgement of me being a *gringa*. Sometimes *gringo/gringa* (the masculine/feminine form) is used disparaging, but the fact that I would use the appellation about myself, seemed to mitigate the gap that might be perceived between me and the informants; not in the least because Brazilians themselves are aware of the disdain often associated with the term and thus seemed to find it funny that a female university student would appropriate it.

### 3 Introducing the cases and the communities

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The two cases have three striking resemblances: both use boxing as a tool to attract and engage children and young people as participants, both were founded by passionate former boxers who departed from their personal competencies and the needs and potentials present in the communities, and both are located in distinctive communities in terms of everyday challenges and opportunities. Yet they are also distinguishable in terms of approach and methodology.

Investigating the two projects in juxtaposition is relevant as they introduce different ways of using sport as an instrument for social good: The one is a “sports only” project while the other, although departing from sports, offers a more comprehensive approach. Both are examples of making sport available and accessible *inside* the communities and contribute to the bulk and distribution of evidence regarding the social potential of sport. A commonality of the projects is that the originators of the projects came up with a good idea – almost by coincidence – when they identified a need or, perhaps more telling, a lack and came up with a plan to allay it.

#### 3.1 Escola de Boxe Raff Giglio, boxing academy in Vidigal

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*It didn't start out as a project for the community. Let me tell you the story... I moved my boxing school here in 1993 and my paying alunos followed me. After some time meninos from the favela began to show up to have a look and some were like, 'Boxing, that's cool.' I asked if they wanted to train boxing, 'You want to? Cool. Come!' And I made a bolsa to train for free. So it started. One bolsa, two bolsas, three bolsas, five, six, seven...*

Raff Giglio, Founder & Director, EBRG

Escola de Boxe Raff Giglio (EBRG) is located in Vidigal, a *favela-bairro*<sup>5</sup> or, in the words of Raff Giglio, a “poor community” in *Zona Sul*. The last official census from 2000 puts the numbers of *moradores* at 9,364,<sup>6</sup> while the local Family Health Program in 2009 had a registry of 25,000 *moradores* in 5,000 households (SOLTEC 2009:11). Situated on the hillside of *Morro Dois Irmãos* (“Two Brothers Hill”) and squeezed in by Leblon and São Conrado, two of the most upscale neighbourhoods in the city. Vidigal is situated on prime real estate with the most magnificent views of Leblon and Ipanema beaches; in fact, Vidigal shares its local beach with the upscale Sheraton

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<sup>5</sup> “Favela” is the Portuguese word for slum. Since the Portuguese appellation has a specific cultural and historical backdrop, it will be applied throughout the thesis. The notion and context of the *favela* will be dealt with in depth in the subsequent chapter.

<sup>6</sup> <http://portalgeo.rio.rj.gov.br/sabren/index.htm>

Hotel. Nonetheless, the majority of residents in Vidigal are far removed from their neighbours in terms of income, social services and opportunities.

EBRG is, first and foremost, a boxing academy created and directed by boxing instructor and former competitive pugilist Raff Giglio. The build-up to the project began when Giglio moved his gym from the upscale neighbourhood Alto Leblon to the *favela* of Vidigal, which is characterised by low income, working class *moradores* and a close proximity to some of the most affluent neighbourhoods in the city of Rio de Janeiro. The majority of Giglio's students moved with the gym, which now found itself situated at the mouth of the *favela*. The *academia* captured the interest of several inhabitants of the local community who began to stop by. Acknowledging the lack of spending power in the community, Giglio offered *bolsas* (bursaries) to the ones who showed a genuine interest in boxing. The social part of the project began to shape up in 1999 when the *bolsistas* were separated from the paying *alunos* into, in Giglio's words, “paying classes” and “social project classes”, and a more focused, competitive effort was put into the training of the former. The project was consolidated as a social initiative when in 2005 a war broke out between *traficantes* in Vidigal and *traficantes* in the nearby *favela* of Rocinha. The violence was disruptive to the entire community and changed the dynamics of the *academia* as the paying participants ceased to come. With the drug trafficking and -war, the need for keeping the *academia* in place only increased but without paying students Giglio began offering boxing lessons in gyms outside the community while keeping up classes for the *bolsistas* in Vidigal. Two years passed in which Giglio maintained the *academia* without any support other than his own unremunerated work and the goodwill of his network. In 2007, Rio de Janeiro hosted the Pan American Games and in this relation the *Law of Incentive to Sports* (LIE)<sup>7</sup> passed through Brazilian legislation prompting a private sponsor to offer financial support to the *academia*. The private sponsor is a private boxing student and “good friend” of the director and such personal relations are, by and large, pivotal for the current configuration of EBRG.<sup>8</sup>

Today EBRG is a purely free-of-charge boxing school. But it is also more. It is a project for the community – it offers something that the community would not have otherwise. It is justified in its potential for educating boys and young men on important matters such as respect, discipline and hard work – core principles in boxing as well as in a successful professional life. Giglio has clearly reflected on an insight that boxing is a highly usable medium for channelling energy and thereby

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<sup>7</sup> Law of Incentive to Sports (Lei de Incentivo ao Esporte, Lei nº 11.438): LIE has created a possibility for encouraging sport through donations and sponsorships from individuals and corporations. Sports projects must be previously approved by the Ministry of Sports in order to qualify from such direct support. The incentive for supporting consists of a tax deduction; however, it is still difficult to identify sponsors accordingly to several of my informants. (Source: <http://portal.esporte.gov.br/>)

<sup>8</sup> Team member, EBRG.

diverting the attention of the young men from the streets and the *facções* operating in the community.

With the financial support, EBRG now functions as a social and so-called Olympic project; social in that it has an aim of developing the students into conscious citizens, and Olympic in the sense that it has another aim of creating competitive amateur fighters; the interaction between stated social and competitive objectives comes to the fore in the analysis when the role of the *competidor* is examined. However, the social side of the project is considered the most important by all the coaches and *alunos* and also serves as justification for including EBRG as a case. In short, the general objective of EBRG is the “physical, moral and social development of children and adolescents in the community, while touching upon notions of citizenship and expectations of creating responsible and productive adults”.<sup>9</sup>

EBRG is open to male-only *alunos* from the age of 7 years and anyone from Vidigal and equivalent communities<sup>10</sup> may participate free of charge – the only, but quite serious, stipulation is that you “stay in school and do your homework”.<sup>11</sup> Approximately 150 children and young people were enrolled at the time of research. A few *alunos* are no longer in school but have embarked on their working life and as long as they take the boxing seriously they are allowed to stay at the *academia*. After working for free at his own *academia* for two years, Raff Giglio now receives a salary and three further boxing instructors have been trained and employed; the latter were all recruited among the EBRG’s *alunos*.

Even with the sponsor, the future of EBRG looks precarious. Due to comprehensive documentation requirements with regards to the tax exemption as outlined in LIE, the sponsored money was at the time of conducting the fieldwork frozen in the *academia*’s account. Furthermore, some inhabitants of the condominium which holds the premises of EBRG have moved to annul the current lease, which is a pro bono agreement that allows the *academia* the use the facilities without paying rent. Finally, the existence of the project is intimately tied to Raff Giglio and his personal network, which begs questions of viability and sustainability in case of his absence.

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<sup>9</sup> [www.projetoboxevidigal.xpg.com.br](http://www.projetoboxevidigal.xpg.com.br)

<sup>10</sup> EBRG is also open to students from, for instance, Rocinha, the *favela* from which traffickers waged war with traffickers from Vidigal in 2004-5. Currently, there is only one student who lives in Rocinha, and though the two *favelas* are geographically close to each other, EBRG may still be too far away for other Rocinha-residents.

<sup>11</sup> Team member, EBRG.

### 3.2 Luta Pela Paz, sports and educational centre in Complexo da Maré

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*Every day we tried to get these kids to put down their glue bottles and they never would. It didn't matter what you gave them – pens, paper, nothing worked. Then one of them heard I was a boxer. I said, 'Do you want me to show you a few moves?' Suddenly, I had five or six of them around me and they'd all left their glue bottles in the corner. That was when Fight for Peace was born.*

Luke Dowdney, Founder & Director of LPP ( in Laureus 2009: 9)

Luta Pela Paz (LPP) is situated in Complexo da Maré, also called simply Maré, a district<sup>12</sup> in the *Zona Norte* that comprises 16 *favelas* with around 130,000 inhabitants (Museu da Maré; Pandolfi & Grynszpan 2003: 15).<sup>13</sup> *Zona Norte* is a sprawling industrial area many times bigger than the *Zona Sul*. Situated between two main highways, Maré is less than an hour out of the commercial and central parts of the city; nonetheless a lot of people living here travel up to 2-3 hours daily in order to get to work in the *Zona Sul*. Like many other *favela* communities Maré has intimate knowledge of how “poverty, exclusion and a lack of social services has led to children and adolescents being employed by drug factions as openly armed foot-soldiers, lookouts and drug sellers.”<sup>14</sup> However, even in comparison to other *favelas*, the level of drug-related violence in Maré is staggering: Barker refers to a war in the period of 1999-2004 between the two *comandos*, *Comando Vermelho* ('The Red Command') and *Terceiro Comando* ('The Third Command') (2005:37). During my stay a continuous war was raging between *Terceiro Comando Puro* ('The Genuine Third Command')<sup>15</sup> and *Amigos dos Amigos* ('The Friends of the Friends') resulting in at least 50 deaths within 4 months in Complexo da Maré. Although *Comando Vermelho* is firmly in control of the *favela* of Nova Holanda, in which LPP is located, the tensions were palpable there as well. Complicating matters is the fact that corrupt police officers and *militias*<sup>16</sup> also vie for control of the criminal activities. During my stay there were numerous episodes with shoot-outs in Maré, including in Nova Holanda, most of which stemmed from police entering the community. The situation is thus highly volatile and you “can never know for sure how long the peace will last” (Jornal do Brasil 2009a). Maré is part of what is popularly referred to as *Faixa de Gaza carioca* (the Gaza Strip of Rio de Janeiro), though the numbers of people killed here by far surpasses the numbers in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict: Between December 1987 and November 2001, 467 Israeli and Palestinian minors were killed, while, in the municipality of Rio de Janeiro alone, 3937

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<sup>12</sup> Translated from “bairro”, which may also be taken to mean neighbourhood.

<sup>13</sup> Two different censuses were undertaken in 2000 and estimated the number of inhabitants between between 113,817 and 132,176; the next census is due in 2010.

<sup>14</sup> <http://www.fightforpeace.net/about.php>

<sup>15</sup> *Terceiro Comando Puro* is a breakaway faction of *Terceiro Comando*, hence the name. The faction came into existence in Maré in 2002 but has since spread its operations to other communities as well.

<sup>16</sup> *Militias* are groups of former and off-duty officers of the law, the fire department or the armed forces. They rule over certain parts of, or entire, communities and engage in criminal activities, including collecting taxes for “protection”.

under eighteen year-olds were killed due to small arms (Dowdney 2003: 173). Caught in the crossfire are the majority of the *moradores*: hard-working and law-abiding adults and their vulnerable children.

Da Silva's case study of the course of events, by which the various favelas in Complexo da Maré were turned into one administrative unit and the following consequences for the social identities, leaves little doubt of the existence of distinguishable communities. (Da Silva 2006). Maré, without the first part of the compound, “complex”, is the name applied in general when people talk about where they live to “outsiders”; however, many also specify the community, or, as it is, *favela*, they reside in, e.g. Nova Holanda. One reason for not including “complex” in the name is that the Portuguese word, *complexo*, originates from a penal vocabulary and refers to prisons (Alvito 2008: 185).

LPP was founded by a former amateur fighter, the Englishman Luke Dowdney, in 2000. In the beginning LPP functioned as a project under Viva Rio, a significant NGO working for a “culture of peace” and social development, and the specific objective of LPP was to break down social barriers and prevent violence through access to sports.<sup>17</sup> LPP functioned as a project under Viva Rio until 2007, when LPP turned an independent NGO in Brazil and a charity in the United Kingdom.<sup>18</sup> In everyday practice in Maré, and for the people frequenting the activities, LPP is a sports and educational centre. In the following, I will refer to LPP not as a NGO but as a project and an *academia* in the same sense as EBRG. While this may be a slight misrepresentation, I do it on the grounds that I have focused solely on *alunos* and team members who are involved in boxing activities at the centre in Rio de Janeiro. My data, therefore, only treats a portion of the NGO that is LPP, to be exact the Centro Esportivo e Educational Luta Pela Paz (CEELLP – Sports and Educational Centre Fight for Peace); however, for the sake of convenience, I apply the acronym LPP throughout the thesis.

LPP presents itself as community-based projects that work “to overcome division and violence and promote the potential of young people in disadvantaged communities”<sup>19</sup>; the stated objective is thus “knock-outing social exclusion”<sup>20</sup> The structure of LPP has evolved since the outset and today LPP works with the 5 pillars: sports, education (notably citizenship classes), social action, work and youth leadership. In practice, sports, boxing, capoeira and luta livre, are combined with various training and support services, including formal and extracurricular education, job skills training

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<sup>17</sup> <http://www.vivario.org.br>

<sup>18</sup> LPP or, in English, Fight for Peace, was expanded to a project in North Woolwich, East London, UK in November 2007.

<sup>19</sup> <http://www.fightforpeace.net/home.php>

<sup>20</sup> [http://www.fightforpeace.net/home\\_pt.php](http://www.fightforpeace.net/home_pt.php)

and paid internships, support services and leadership training.<sup>21</sup> An estimated 850 participated at LPP in 2009 for shorter or longer periods of time.<sup>22</sup> Sport is the means by which participants are attracted and engaged while, at the same time, the focus is on building citizenship skills, with an emphasis on education, work and leadership. Similar to EBRG, a key element is using sport to channel adolescent energy that could too easily lead to e.g. involvement in gang violence. LPP has different sports on offer but I have chosen to focus solely on boxing for a number of reasons: In addition to seeing it as a frame of reference between the two *academias*, boxing is also the most popular activity at LPP in the sense that it draws *alunos* from all age groups and it draws almost equal numbers of male and female *alunos* (Luta Pela Paz 2007).

LPP's methodology can be said to reflect the best practices of sport-in-development programmes as it involves youth leaders and provides additional training and support to the participants (Coalter 2007: 75). Every young person I talked to was drawn to LPP by the sports on offer but in order to participate in the boxing classes everyone, including the *competidores*, is required to participate in weekly citizenship classes. This means that every participant has at least minimal understanding of participating in a “social project” – as opposed to EBRG where the *alunos* know that they are doing boxing, but do not necessarily reflect upon their participation in terms of “citizenship output”.

The project is not actively canvassing for participants from outside of Maré and the majority of the *alunos* come from Nova Holanda and the three *favelas* situated closest to the centre; this is in part due to the before mentioned 'multiplicity' of Maré but even more because of the balkanization of Maré along the lines of criminal factions with clear demarcation of affiliations (Dowdney 2003: 75; Porto 2008: 4; Jornal do Brasil 2009a).<sup>23</sup> One example is the appellation given to the street that separates Nove Holanda from a neighbouring favela: *Fogo Cruzado* (crossfire). In addition to reducing the spatial mobility of the young people (Deuchar 2009: 12), it compounds the already profound state of vulnerability in which many young people find themselves. The conditions in Maré are thus highly challenging and require innovative ideas.

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<sup>21</sup> [www.fightforpeace.net](http://www.fightforpeace.net)

<sup>22</sup> Team member, LPP.

<sup>23</sup> Tenure in terms of criminal activities is marked by tagging the walls with the acronym of the *facção* in power.

## 4 The cities in the city or: The margin in the middle

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*This is a place where people are very close to each other, there is a lot of solidarity between people. There are some problems, government stuff, related to being a favela, and when they [the government] offer something, they offer something of poor quality, like education. We have few leisure moments. There are some conflicts, issues of security. That's it.*

Team member, LPP

Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, is dubbed 'the marvellous city' because of its inescapable natural beauty; however, it is one of the most divided cities in the world with great difference between the 'haves' and the 'have-nots' – a gap that is not solely about financial means but, more devastatingly, about social means. The biggest challenge is arguably the existence of social 'have-nots': People who regardless of educational or occupational attainment are marginalised in Brazilian society as they face prejudices and misconceptions and lack recognition and respect. There seems to be an incongruity between the physical proximity and the socio-cultural and psychological distance – the *favela* and the *asfalto* are at the same time so close and yet so far from each other.<sup>24</sup>

The two cases are, as previously mentioned, located and taking action in a rather specific context in which the involved young people are considered hard to reach – not in terms of behaviour or attitude, but due to their social reality (Crabbe 2009: 184). Although context is an “emergent” notion that is dependent on the researcher's or interpreter's perception of relevance and limitation and as such is a “deliberately chosen framework of relevance” (Hastrup 2003: 413), I argue that a contextualization – understood as locating the research in its social, geographical and historical context (Harris & Parker 2009: 174) – is highly relevant in order to understand the problem and the purpose of the thesis, and, thus, essential to establish the challenges to and potential for taking action. In addition to placing the two cases in context, this chapter will also introduce the important notions of marginality, social exclusion and social inclusion. By so doing, the problem and the hypotheses are further established and the instrumentality of sport operationalised.

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<sup>24</sup> *Asfalto* literally means asphalt or paved road and is used to signify the “regulated” or formal part of the city as opposed to *morro* or *favela*, i.e. the “unregulated” parts. In fact, these days most *favelas* have paved roads.

## 4.1 The *favela*

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*“Favela: Agglomeration of huts in certain parts of large urban centres, crudely built and lacking hygienic resources; residence of the poorest of the population.”<sup>25</sup>*

*It's favela, comunidade is for the English (the foreigner) to see*

*Moradora de favela* (in Alvito 2008: 185)

The two cases are both situated in Rio de Janeiro; Escola de Boxe Raff Giglio is situated in Vidigal while Luta Pela Paz is in Nova Holanda, which is a part of *Complexo da Maré*. Both these communities are designated as *favela*; though one should not make the mistake of confounding the various *favelas* as there are more than 600 in the city of Rio de Janeiro alone, providing an estimated 20 % of Rio de Janeiro's population with a place to call home. While there are traits that repeat themselves, each *favela* certainly has its own characteristics, just as every small town has its characteristics. *Favela* can be translated roughly into shanty town or slum but, as previously argued, I have opted to maintain the Portuguese name. The term 'favela' is derived from an early settlement known as Morro de Favella (*sic*), and some *favelas* emerged as improvised settlements, primarily as a result of increasing rural-urban migration, while others were initiated as a type of public housing scheme in order to move *favela* dwellers away from valuable land in central Rio de Janeiro.<sup>26</sup> Several of such public housing schemes, so-called *conjuntos*, are considered *favelas*, or *neofavelas*, today. Many *favelas* today are like towns within the city: Some have schools and health clinics, although sub-standard, and every single one has a *praça* – a town square – where community events are staged including, as is the case with the two *academias*, public boxing matches.

A contextualization of the two cases must necessarily address the issue of how the communities in which they are situated are talked about. Many representations, especially in newspapers, involve negative stereotypes and preconceptions, if not prejudices regarding *favelas* and the people who live there, and the two communities involved here are no exceptions. *Favela* dwellers may be referred to as *favelados*, and while it is etymologically correct, meaning someone from the favela, it has derogatory connotations (Barker 2005: 47) and in some instances indicates stigmatisation and stereotyping.<sup>27</sup> In recent years, attention has increasingly been on *favelas* as “under served [*sic*] communities” (Porto 2008: 7) – and rightly so. *Favelas* are under-served in comparison to other

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<sup>25</sup> <http://www.dicionariodoaurelio.com>

<sup>26</sup> Perlman's original study (publ.1976) for instance included a *favela*, Catacumba, which no longer exists.

<sup>27</sup> A claim that is supported by Dicionário Aurelio, one of the most comprehensive dictionaries of Brazilian Portuguese, which defines *favelado* as 1) a *favela* dweller; 2) a *maloqueiro* – the latter is literally a person who lives in a hut but is often used as a term for a ragged, uneducated or criminal person.

parts of the city, notably in terms of social services and in the places where social services are accessible, the quality is often lacking. Interestingly, while LPP presents itself as situated in “a complex of favelas ... low-income communities”,<sup>28</sup> EBRG says that it provides boxing for a “needy community”<sup>29</sup> and in general avoids the use of the word *favela* on its webpage.

My informants only talked about “the *favela*” in general terms, when addressing e.g. social problems – when talking about the *favela* in which they themselves live they would either use the specific name, e.g. Vidigal, or simply say “this community”. One study demonstrates that despite the fact that all of its respondents lived in urban areas defined as *favela* communities, 19% claimed to live in the *asfalto* (Dowdney 2003: 175). The substitution of *favela* for *comunidade* alerts us to how the schism between ascriptions and descriptions may be indicative of prejudices and expectations (Cf. Silva 2002: 5n).

A *favela* is not necessarily a great place to live but it may have many positive features and lots of *favela* dwellers, including many of my informants, indicate that they like to live in their specific community and do not envision moving anywhere else. However, Scheper-Hughes reminds us that people trapped by e.g. worry, are sometimes “less aware, less critically reflective of their lives” (Scheper-Hughes 1992: 175) – a sentiment supported by an informant in Vidigal: “Most of them do not know anything else so how can they decide that there is not a better place for them”.<sup>30</sup> The fact remains that while *favela* residents may not be “forcibly relegated” to the community in which they live, the alternatives are often scant (Perlman 2005: 20).

## 4.2 A seven-headed beast – violence at the hands of criminals and the state

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“It is always defined by what it would not have.” (Souza e Silva & Barbosa 2005: 24)

Strictly financially speaking, *favela* dwellers are not necessarily poor, but the *favelas* are nonetheless described as needy neighbourhoods. This is not necessarily due to a lack of basic services such as water and sewage, which remains a reality for some although great improvements have been made, but rather a lack of public services and political representation (Dowdney 2003: 52). Departing from Amartya Sen's concept of development, Santos argues that poverty is not only a matter of income but also a matter of freedom to choose (Santos 2007).

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<sup>28</sup> [http://www.fightforpeace.net/about\\_pt.php](http://www.fightforpeace.net/about_pt.php)

<sup>29</sup> <http://www.projetoboxevidigal.xpg.com.br/5.html>

<sup>30</sup> Interview with Paulo Lupa Medeiros, NDM.

The *favela* takes on an almost mythical aura as it is related to so much desperation and degradation as well as happiness and innovation. After all, the *favelas* both constitute the site *par excellence* of the samba schools, i.e. the backbone of the carnival, and the primary site of the drug trade. To people outside of the *favela*, notably the middle and upper classes, the *favela* epitomises what is wrong with Rio de Janeiro and it is no surprise that the *favela* is referred to as a “seven-headed beast” (Alvito 2005). The *favelas* have long-standing links to the drug trade in Rio de Janeiro but, in fact, “represent drug trafficking's poorest and least sophisticated manifestation” because, while the *favelas* see most of the violence in terms of territorial disputes, police incursions and de facto child soldiers, the profits from the drug trade end up outside of the communities and in the hands of the social and political elites (Dowdney 2003: 73f).

*People always ask me if the resident of Maré is more scared of the traficante or the police. Of the police, for sure. This is not a prejudice against the armed wing of the state. This fear is the result of the misguided politics adopted by the state. I am talking about the politics of confrontation. Or better, of extermination.*

Francisco Marcelo, *morador* and researcher, Maré (Carta Capital 2009)

Many *favelas* deal with substantial fear and violence, much of which stems from the omnipresent *tráfico*. The violence may ebb and flow and a seemingly peaceful community may suddenly erupt in violence, e.g. in 2005 when a drug war raged between traffickers in Vidigal and nearby Rocinha and in 2009, during the fieldwork, when *facções* within Complexo da Maré were fighting over control.<sup>31</sup> This obviously hampers the immediate and perceived freedom of the residents as well as potentially impacts on any effort to provide social services (Cf. Perlman 2005: 22).<sup>32</sup> The reality of some *favelas* in Rio de Janeiro is comparable to war-like, or rather civil war-like, conditions as the number of people killed compared to other conflicts is staggering. Although the “realities of war” as well as acceptable levels of violence may vary between societies (Nordstrom & Robben 1995: 7), the level of violence in Rio de Janeiro is deemed unacceptable by every person that I have come across, rich as well as poor. The violence is, however, habitually directed inwards, afflicting *favela* dwellers to a much larger degree than middle- and upper-class *Cariocas* (Barker 2005: 26) for what reason the perceived threat to the higher echelons of society seems more imagined than real.

The violence does not just come from within or below, but also from above. Such violence is evidenced, *inter alia*, by the strategies for dealing with drug trafficking, regularly involving excursions by heavily armed police into the narrow alleys of certain *favelas* and often resulting in

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<sup>31</sup> During the period of June-September 2009 an estimated 50 persons were killed in relation to this, among these several young people (Journal do Brasil 2009a).

<sup>32</sup> These events slightly impacted on the fieldwork in the sense that it was necessary to stay continuously updated on events in the various communities.

fatalities, as the police shoot indiscriminately of whether people are proven criminals or innocent bystanders. In the media representations, and among the populist segments, it makes no difference – the victims are all *bandidos* (Barker 2005: 37) and thus deserve no better fate. In addition, there is substantial structural violence in the form of mass unemployment, including labour precariousness, relegation to decaying neighbourhoods and a heightened stigmatisation in daily life and in public discourse (Wacquant 2008b: 25).

### 4.3 From marginality to social exclusion to advanced marginality

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“How did these spaces become so invisible, being identified on the basis of prejudices rather than their actual characteristics.” (Silva & Barbosa 2005: 24)

The notion of marginalisation is arguably a feature of Latin American accounts of the emergence, growth and challenge of slums. Marginality is a spatial feature as the *favelas* are demarcated as “defamed enclaves of concentrated marginality” (Wacquant 2008: 69a). The favela has been followed by notions of marginality throughout most of its existence, not just in terms of being settlements on the margins of the city – though geographically often situated inside the city itself – but also in terms of being populated by *marginals* and *marginalizados*, noting the difference between the noun and the adjective. While “marginal” in a European context can also refer to sub-cultures and, thus, to ways of positioning oneself, or rather identifying oneself, it always carries negative connotations in Brazil. The noun, marginal, has a double meaning in Portuguese as it can refer to both a marginal or peripheral person and to a criminal, and it thus carries a negative meaning (Perlman 1976: 91f). The adjective, marginalised, is a highly vulnerable position and is related to processes social exclusion. With this, marginalisation in the specific context of the *favela* cannot be conceived as a sub-cultural positioning, as a way of identifying oneself, but is a fundamentally ascribed position.

As demonstrated by Perlman (1976; 2002) most *favela* dwellers are tightly integrated into the society, although the integration is “perversely asymmetrical” (2002: 5). Most people find work outside of the community; however, in many regards they can be said to be excluded from broader society. Marginality and social exclusion are thus interrelated but can be distinguished: Marginality implies that one has limited or no connection to formal institutions such as the labour market, educational system etc., while social exclusion is derived from a differentiation produced by the state and its institutions, e.g. through the public educational system, and is “thus based on a differentiated inclusion in a social system” (Roberts 2004: 196).

Social exclusion is a multidimensional concept addressing levels of insertion into social and public life and is an apt notion to address the challenges facing many *favela* dwellers. As community life and societal life may be somewhat oppositional in a *Carioca* context, a person may very well be integrated and excluded at the same time – “they are able to contribute but not able to receive” (Kabeer (1999), quoted in Perlman 2005: 12). In fact, it is common among poorer segments of Brazilian society to understand citizenship solely in terms of duties and not in terms of rights (SOLTEC 2009: 38).

Marginality is also a discourse and as such results in specific practices, notably policies, that are regularly based on a myriad of stereotypes – many of which are questionable or outright mistaken (Perlman 1976). One example of such a stereotype is that of every *favela* dweller being a criminal or, at least, a supporter of criminals – a viewpoint regularly expressed in both newspaper commentaries and in “broader collective imagery” (Vargas 2003: 24).<sup>33</sup>

*The morador de favela, nowadays, is often put forward by the media as an accessory. The guy is not an accessory, he is a cohabitant.*

Francisco Marcelo, *morador* and researcher, Maré (in Carta Capital 2009)

As Perlman writes, today there is only one recurring distinction between the *morro* and the *asfalto*<sup>34</sup> and that is “the deeply-rooted stigma that adheres to [the favelas]” (2005: 2). The stigma often implies discursive designations of the inhabitants as *favelados*, if not as *vagabundos*;<sup>35</sup> examples of such crude and pejorative representations of the reality of life of many of Rio de Janeiro's inhabitants are often to be found in the online commentary section of newspapers and in online forums.<sup>36</sup> In the most extreme depictions, *favela* dwellers are barely considered citizens with the same rights and duties as everyone else and “the method of dealing with unemployment, lack of educational opportunity, hunger, and racism is »social cleansing« of the poor” (Yúdice 2004: 122).

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<sup>33</sup> By newspaper commentaries, I refer to the possibility of commenting on online news pieces and not to proper letters of opinions. By no means do I regard such commentaries to be representative of the majority of Brazilians, but I maintain that there are substantial numbers of people who harness such opinions.

<sup>34</sup> Historically, *favelas* in Rio de Janeiro were situated on the hillsides throughout the city, which lead to interchangeable uses of *favela* and *morro*; the latter simply meaning “hill”. *Favelas* are, however, to a large extent situated in all types of terrain – flat or otherwise; Complexo da Maré is for instance located in a former mangrove, hence the name (Cf. Silva 2002).

<sup>35</sup> *Vagabundo* may be translated into vagrant or bum, and it is yet another degrading term used to designate a multitude of different individuals and groups who are seen as not conforming to mainstream society.

<sup>36</sup> This is not to imply that the viewpoint is shared by the majority of Brazilians but merely to establish that the concepts of *favela*, crime and marginality are often intertwined in news pieces and discussions of how to counter the extreme crime rate in the country.

*Favela* dwellers may not be “forcibly relegated” to their communities with no chance of moving away (Perlman 2004: 192), but chances are still limited and some of my informants indicated that establishing a life outside of the *favela* was difficult in terms of finances as well as in terms of adaptation. I believe that the many *favelas*, but surely not all, may be characterised by advanced marginality understood as a “novel regime of sociospatial relegation and exclusionary closure” (Wacquant 2008b: 2). What primarily characterises the *favela* is, then, its social predicament.

*Don't say needy communities but communities with social disadvantages.*

Celso Anthayde, CUFA

#### 4.4 *Alegria na cidade*

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The *favela* has been described as a pain but also a joy in the city (cf. Silva & Barbosa 2005) and the many positive aspects and potentials in the various communities should not be disregarded. It is important to keep in mind that *favelas* function as spaces of socialisation, cultural production and sports (Barker 2005: 39), and one should not discount the very real possibilities for addressing the various challenges from within.

The entrepreneurial opportunities in the *favelas* are to some extent connected to the fact that they are demarcated territories. Most obvious is the strong sense of community and belonging that one encounters; often it feels like entering a small town with its own pace and a lot of people indicate sentiments of responsibility towards the local community. As the two involved communities demonstrate, there are sometimes numerous NGOs and civil society organisations working in the communities; however in order to be successful it is necessary to work from within by utilising and improving potentials and resources already present. The sense of community may easily be translated into ownership, including local pride and sense of accomplishment – important aspects for making a real and lasting positive impact. This is also a governing principle for both the investigated projects as they involve and engage the local communities and certainly serve as points of pride in return.

## 4.5 Sporting practices in the *favela*

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*Here in the community there is not a lot [of sport]. There is football – there is football in every place – capoeira, there is also judo. That's it.*

Team member, EBRG

*We have a lot of football. When the government does something in relation to sport they create football fields because 'everyone in the favela wants to be a football player'. What we have most of in the community are football fields.*

Team member, LPP

As football continues to reign supreme, it is virtually impossible to find a *favela* without the sport – and as stated above the city authorities have established football pitches in many *favelas* as a “social good”. However, access to other sports is often limited and expensive. Both Vidigal and Maré fare better than other *favelas*: Vidigal has judo and capoeira academies in addition to EBRG and the beach, with its public football and volleyball schools, is a short walk away. Maré has a *vila olímpica* (Olympic village), which is a “socio-sports complex” offering sports, cultural, health and educational activities to more than 8,000 children and young people.<sup>37</sup> However, the *vila olímpica* is situated in the *favela* of Baixa do Sapateiro, a different community than the one in which LPP is situated, which may impede the access of participants from some of the other *favelas* in Maré. As established previously, certain parts of Maré are separated according to the *façções* in charge and many young people invariably feel that they cannot enter other *favela* communities due to the presence of a different *façção* than in their own community (Dowdney 2003: 178f.). Even with the sports on offer, both Vidigal and Maré are considered under-served when it comes to organised sports activities, especially sport for social good activities. Such minimal access means that amateur sports often suffer in Brazil – especially due to lack of funding – and the private sector offers little support, though it has been encouraged with LEI.<sup>38</sup>

Access to and choice between social services is a fundamental principle of being socially included in the society in which one lives, but access should not be limited to education and health care – sport and physical education in general is also of fundamental importance. Being a child or young person in a *favela* often means that you have no or extremely limited access to books, toys, safe playgrounds and never visit a cinema, theatre or museum (Barker 2005: 47). You do have universal access to schooling; however, an estimated 45 % of the public schools in the city of Rio de Janeiro

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<sup>37</sup> <http://www.vilaolimpicadamare.org.br/>

<sup>38</sup> The lack of funding and access may be expected to change somewhat in the run-up to the Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro in 2016. Whether such an increase in funding is sustained after the event is debatable.

do not have a proper sports court (O Globo 2009).<sup>39</sup> In fact, even when including the numbers from the so-called Olympic villages<sup>40</sup> and other places of activity, the Secretary of Sports only serves estimated less than 10 % of students enrolled in public schools (ibid.). This is significant as sport arguably serves some fundamental social functions related to health, socialisation etc.

Drawing on Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital, it is often argued that choosing a sport to practice often depends on preferences and skills acquired through upbringing and education (Wilson 2002: 6; Tomlinson 2004). However, in the specific context of the *favela*, cultural capital can be argued to be of little relevance compared to the practical reality of access: There simply may not be many sports to choose from. In addition, factoring in economic capital, one can quickly determine that even with access to a wide range of different sports, participants are still limited to choosing cheap – or in this case – free branches. While boxing in Brazil do not have the backdrop of 'prole' or working-class sport (Wilson 2002) as is common in, *inter alia*, the United Kingdom and the United States, there is arguably an awareness of the cultural history of boxing among the originators of the two projects: In recent decades boxing has been connected to lower and working class segments of society and the great heroes of boxing exemplifies how one can beat disadvantage. The lack of sporting tradition in Brazil is, in part, due to the way boxing and other martial arts, most notably capoeira, were considered attributes of “marginality”.<sup>41</sup> This is an aspect that makes the use of boxing even more interesting and relevant when dealing with issues of social exclusion in a Brazilian context and certainly also a reason for me to focus on the sport.

#### 4.6 More than the cessation of exclusion

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Young people from the *favelas* encounter several challenges: a setting of social exclusion and marginalisation; risk of becoming involved in or a victim of gang-related violence; and limited access to educational and employment opportunities (Barker 2005: 8; Dowdney 2003). These issues may impact negatively on a young person's sense of selfhood. One way of countering these challenges may be to provide people with a sense of equality, of worth and “a way to succeed” (Deuchar 2009: 11) and targeted sports-initiatives may be one way of doing that.

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<sup>39</sup> The number for the state of Rio de Janeiro as a whole is even higher.

<sup>40</sup> The Olympic villages (*vilas olímpicas*) were constructed in relation to the Pan-American Games which were held in Rio de Janeiro in 2007. The purpose was to provide more parts of the city with areas for sports (<http://www.vilaolimpicadamare.org.br/portaibranco/>).

<sup>41</sup> [http://www.cbboxe.com.br/boxe\\_amador\\_historia.htm](http://www.cbboxe.com.br/boxe_amador_historia.htm)

Countering or obliterating social exclusion, i.e. removing or revising institutions that differentiate social services and securing equal and unbiased participation, does not necessarily lead to social inclusion. Social inclusion understood as being empowered to take control over one's life and future requires more: It requires respect (both being respected and respecting others), learning of life skills and other competencies, self-esteem and -control, participation and access *in practice*, and knowing oneself – elements that may potentially be furthered through sports participation. How sport may function as a tool is related to the fact that sport is about meeting other people and engaging with them: It is about building and transforming social capital and identity.

## 5 Analytical framework

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As the ethnological enterprise is ever-expanding and changing, any endeavour may take on a multidisciplinary mantle. This is reflected in the eclectic and dialectic selection and employment of concepts; instead of setting out from any specific “theory”, I apply and investigate various concepts, which have been identified and adapted throughout the process. The title of the thesis in this sense also alludes to the drawing up of the analytical frame: By rolling with the punches – perhaps another name for the ‘iterative-inductive’ method (cf. O’Reilly 2005) – the theory and empirical data influence each other and are continuously adapted to investigate the problem statement. In practice, relevant themes have been identified and operationalised and these themes have in turn influenced on the framework. Through this process, central notions have been drawn out as will be elaborated in the analysis. The cases have, therefore, been applied to identify the conceptual groundwork; however, several concepts, including the key notions of social capital and inclusion, had come into play as soon as the topic was identified.

The analytical framework is comprised of the following optics: Sport as an instrument for social good, social capital as a resource and social identity with an emphasis on positioning and navigation. What these approaches have in common is the word social, which is taken to signify that, although the point of departure here is the individual, what is at stake is both individual and community wellbeing.

### 5.1 Departing from sport

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This thesis applies sport, specifically boxing, as an element in the analytical frame for investigating how social capital and identity can be transformed. As way of introduction, a fundamental clarification of the concept of sport, as it is applied in this thesis, is in order. When working with sport for development and peace purposes, one customarily “includes all forms of physical activity that contribute to physical fitness, mental well-being and social interaction” (Right to Play 2008: 3). In the following, the emphasis will be less inclusive, focusing on organised sport and excluding “mere” play. This is due to play being “instinctive” while sport can be said to be a “regulated physical contest” and as such is a “product of culture” (Guttman 1993: 125).

Sport is here defined as “institutionalized competitive activities that involve rigorous physical exertion or the use of relatively complex physical skills by participants motivated by internal or external rewards” (Coakley 2007: 6).

The physical aspect is what sets sport apart from other social activities such as games, which may or may not be physical. The competitive aspect may distract from the fact that sport may just as well be cooperative, but is taken to refer to the fact that sport involves accomplishments that can only be measured in comparison to others. Sport is further institutionalized in that it involves “formal rules and organisational structures” (ibid.). Finally, the “rewards” encompass both tangible outcomes, such as proficiency in the ring, and intangible outcomes, such as self-esteem and recognition by others. Social capital, which I shall treat in depth in the following, may be regarded as both a tangible and an intangible result. While sport is a culturally dependent category, it must be stressed that the definition applied here firmly centres on a modern notion of the sport, and the specific sport investigated is the so-called English boxing.<sup>42</sup>

Whether one plays sports or not, may be the starting point but the determining factor is not sports participation *per se*. It is rather the structuring or organising of the sports participation and the framework in which the sporting practice unfolds: The sports activities must be well-forecast, well-planned and well-executed (cf. Right to Play 2008; NSD 2009). Departing from the two projects, EBRG and LPP, it is argued that simply playing sports does not necessarily entail that young people learn skills and develop attitudes that may “prepare them for productive futures”; however, if the sport is organised in the right way, involving competent and engaged coaches and other key persons, then “positive youth development is more likely to occur” (Petitpas et al. 2008: 61). Such organised sports activities can further be targeted in order to serve a social purpose, a matter to which I turn next.

### 5.1.1 *Esporte social* – sport for social good

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An interesting aspect in Brazil is how often sport is connected to issues of political, cultural and social life: The notion of *esporte social* (social sport) refers to the use of sport to promote social inclusion, including enabling “children and adolescents to join society in a positive manner”.<sup>43</sup> It is fundamentally coupled with a notion of *cidadania* (citizenship) or, rather, with a vision of what citizenship entails with regards to rights and duties and how best to achieve good citizens.

The social role of sport departs from a functionalist view in which the value of sport stems from its ability to transmit social values to the participants (Jarvie & Maguire 1994: 9). Whether team-based or individual, sport requires understanding of and adherence to rules and, when done right,

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<sup>42</sup> English boxing, or traditional boxing, being the denomination used in Brazil.

<sup>43</sup> <http://portal.esporte.gov.br/snee/esportesocial/sobre.jsp>

sports participation does not merely teach sporting skills but life skills, such as cooperation and communication. In short, sport makes up a socializing institution (Rosentraub & Ijla 2008: 340). For that reason, sports-based projects are often argued to impact positively on diverse, yet often interrelated, objectives such as urban regeneration, crime prevention and social inclusion – important challenges in the context of the *favela*. However, one should be wary of attributing a “mythopoeic status” to sport (Coalter 2007) as sport, no matter how well organised, does not invariably lead to changes let alone positive outcomes.

An essential prerequisite in the application of sport for social good is quality. A quality sport is well-organised, inclusive, exciting and involves positive role models.<sup>44</sup> Another fundamental requirement is that the sports activities should be targeted, i.e. that they have an aim. The aim may vary between participating for health, social or competitive purposes or other individually defined purposes. And, finally, it has to be fun; if it gets too educational, technical or hard it gets boring – especially for the youngest participants. You have to take the age group into consideration when planning activities and foster learning through play, for instance by applying games to foster physical as well as social skills.

Two major trends have evolved in recent years within the field of sport for social good; these may be referred to, respectively, as sport for community regeneration and sport for development and peace. Both represent policy-targets as well as real initiatives on the ground but while the former has a long-standing history in national programmes, the latter has, with a few notable exceptions, only picked up in the new millennium. The first International Conference on Sport and Development, in 2003,<sup>45</sup> pushed the agenda forward and the UN stated its commitment when declaring that sport by nature is:

“about participation, inclusion and a sense of belonging ... Sport [provides] a forum to learn skills such as discipline, confidence and leadership and [conveys ] core principles that are important in democracy, such as tolerance, cooperation and respect. [Sport teaches] the fundamental value of effort and how to manage essential steps in life such as victory or defeat.”<sup>46</sup>

When summing up these positive aspects, the social abilities of sport are confirmed; however, the UN fails to address the fact that sport is a useful socialisation tool for whatever social skills and values you want to imbue a young person with, both positive or negative. If sport can be utilised to

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<sup>44</sup> Kylie Bates, Australian Sport Commission, Network for Sport & Development (NSD) Conference Workshop, Copenhagen, 12 May 2009.

<sup>45</sup> <http://www.maggingen2005.org/index.cfm?id=33>

<sup>46</sup> [http://www.un.org/sport2005/a\\_year/why.html](http://www.un.org/sport2005/a_year/why.html)

build peace, then certainly it can also be utilised to build conflict. What it comes down to is the conception and implementation of the sports-based initiative – and the realisation that sport alone does not do all that. Rather, sport is but one instrument in the toolbox. While it must be acknowledged that benefits derived from participating in sports activities are “only a possibility” (Svoboda 1994, in Coalter 2005: 6), it is maintained that sports participation does contribute to social well-being even though the effects are difficult to measure.

### 5.1.2 Best values and best practices

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Sport is about *participation* and as such is intimately connected to building relationships. This is perhaps the most important aspect of sport for social good and will be dealt with in detail in the next sections. As already noted, simply participating in sport does not ensure positive results, rather sport must be “structured in the right way” in addition to involve “trained, caring adult mentors” (Petitpas et al. 2008: 61) And the tangible contribution of sport towards social inclusion may then only be *indirect* and consist in contributing “positively to partnerships with educationalists and others” (Coalter 2005: 16).

In order to serve a defined social purpose, projects should reflect the best values of sport, including “fair play, teamwork, cooperation, respect for opponents, and inclusion – reinforce [the social] process by helping participants to acquire values and life skills consistent with positive social relationships, collaborative action, and mutual support” (Right to Play 2008: 5). Further, sport for social good should be based on a number of practices, such as: a meaningful occupation, positive role models and social competencies – all of which may potentially result in an impact outside of the sports academies.

On a final note, projects should be based on a ‘bottom-up’ principle, in that they should depart from resources and needs in the specific community. When addressing issues or challenges that are perceived as relevant by the community, e.g. unemployment or gang membership, a project may more easily secure local commitment and ownership (Coalter 2005: 24).

## 5.2 Social capital

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Social capital seems to be *the* key concept for examining the value of sport for social good. It is, however, highly contested and often suffers from conceptual vagueness almost to the point of seeming inapplicability. On one hand it has been stretched so far that “[a]lmost any form of social interaction has the potential to be understood as social capital” (Fine 2007: 567), and on the other hand, it lacks definitional sharpness as well as empirical evidence. The concept is nonetheless relevant as it calls attention to “the positive consequences of sociability” as well as stresses the importance of “nonmonetary forms”, such as trust and respect, as sources of power and influence (Portes 1998: 2).

### 5.2.1 What is and isn't social capital? Definition and delimitation

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Several theoreticians have contributed to establishing the concept of social capital. As a principal proponent, Bourdieu establishes social capital as “the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition” (1986:248). Bourdieu argues that social capital, as other forms of capital, can be mobilized and utilized but first and foremost requires investment. In continuation hereof, Coleman proposes that social capital is related to obligations and expectations, information channels and social norms and as such is a resource for action (1988). With Coleman, the relevance of social capital for inclusion and socialisation becomes clear. A third popular proponent of the concept is Putnam who defines social capital as “connections among individuals – social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them.” (2000: 19). While Putnam’s reading is highly propagated it is also criticised as it amounts to a confusion of cause and effect: “social capital (social relations) produces social capital (trust)” (Seippel 2006: 171).

These aspects of social capital – on the one side as resources, including access, investment, fungibility and expected return, and on the other side as relations, including reciprocity, trust and cooperation – are not considered exclusive but rather mutually reinforcing (Nicholson & Hoyer 2008: 5f.). The concept of social capital is made up of two words (cf. Seippel 2006): *Capital* is a commodity in its double meaning; it is a form of goods, and it has a specific capacity. *Social* alludes to the fact that it deals with relationships. Social capital is, for the task at hand, defined simply as “*the goods inherent in social relationships*”, i.e. the resources available to an individual through its relations to others (Small 2009: 6f, my emphasis). Or put differently: Social capital alludes to the

value inherent in networks – and the fact that individuals, and groups of individuals, can profit from their relationships.

The concept applied here is thus connected to the individual who is part of a group or organisation, rather than being a feature of the community as it has often developed into (Portes 2000: 3; Putnam 2000). The effects of social capital creation and recreation very likely stretch beyond the individual or group as the community may experience positive outcomes as result of an increase in its members' collectively accumulated social capital. When keeping the concept of social capital "grounded" in the individual or groups of individuals, it is easier to separate causes and effects. This is hoped to avoid the circular argument (along the lines of 'social capital leads to better governance, better governance leads to social capital') often resulting from conceptualising social capital as a collective trait (Portes 2000: 4; Portes 1998: 19). As a property, capital – social as well as other forms – is a form of power or capacity "to impact upon, change or control situations." (Tomlinson 2004: 168). In this lies the relevance of social capital to, potentially, subverting marginalisation.

Social capital has an intangible quality compared to other forms of capital. Both economic, e.g. money, and human capital, e.g. knowledge, can be quantified whereas social capital "inheres in the structure of [people's] relationships" (Portes 1998: 7). The amount of social capital is dependent on the quality, intensity and regularity of those relationships. The goods that result from social relationships may be exchanged for other goods and social capital is, thus, related to possibilities for individual action, for altering one's position. However, the social capital is not unbounded but acquired in a specific social structure, in a specific *field*.

The field refers to the setting in which agents are positioned and positions themselves and is "a social arena within which struggles or manoeuvres take place over specific resources or stakes and access to them"; a field is then "defined by the stakes which are at stake ... and may be of differing degrees of specificity and concreteness." (Bourdieu 1986a; Jenkins 1992: 84). The notion of the social field brings the context back in and reminds us that social capital is a dynamic, not a static, concept. A manifestation of social capital may lead to a reward in one instance, while lead to nothing in other instances. In short, social capital may, or may not, be transferable to capital in other fields.

Social capital is sometimes confused with notions such as network, which adds to the dilution of the concept. Putnam offers some situational, if not functional, conceptions of social capital that, then, paradoxically are applied to explain the functional workings of social capital (cf. Putnam 2000; Small 2009). As established, social capital is rather *derived* from one's network – and from

relations built to other networks. This is what is referred to as, respectively, *bonding* and *bridging* social capital:

“Bonding social capital is good for undergirding specific reciprocity and mobilizing solidarity... Bridging networks, by contrast, are better for linkage to external assets and for information diffusion.” (Putnam 2000: 22)

These two notions converge with Bourdieu’s concept of the social field in order to explain how social capital may be acquired and deployed: Capital acquired in a given social field may or may not be applicable in other social fields – just as social capital may lead to bonding with individuals in the same social field but do not necessarily lead to bridging to individuals in other social fields.

## 5.2.2 Sport and social capital

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The apparent omnipresence of social capital in discussions of the social potential of sport is credited to especially Putnam (2000) who operationalised the concept in relation to notions of civic virtue and community and, hence, made social capital a quantifiable goal. An important aspect of sports-based projects and programmes is that they often have to demonstrate their impact in order to secure e.g. funding and “sport builds social capital” seems to be the missing link. However, there is a lack of empirical evidence demonstrating that this is so (NSD 2009: 11). This is due to several factors, most notably the lack of conceptual clarity regarding social capital as outlined above and the challenge of measuring, or quantifying, social capital.

It is important to realise that sport is not a panacea and will not necessarily result in positive outcomes in various areas of social life (Spraklen 2007). When policy makers claim that “sport creates social capital for the good of society” they are fallaciously assuming that social capital can be effortlessly exchanged into other forms of capital, notably economic and cultural capital, so that norms and values learned and the network established through sports participation are universally usable (ibid: 24f.).

Moving away from a quantitative notion (“the more social capital the better!”), and on to a qualitative conception (“how is social capital realised?”) might help to grasp how sport and social capital are related. The relevance of social capital when investigating sport for social good stems precisely from the fact that sport is about participation: Relationships are at the very core of playing sports. In addition, the link to social capital is primarily evident when investigating a targeted sports-project as the context and process of sports participation is pivotal (Coalter 2007:

55). A targeted and well-organised sports-project certainly has something to offer with regards to building, transforming and utilising social capital. In this regard, we may conceive of a sports-project as a social field.

“Sports build social capital because they build self-confidence and teach respect for rules ... Playing sports widens our horizons in ways that few other leisure activities can. Sports widen our social contact. They spread tolerance and egalitarian values on the sly.” (Uslaner 1999: 146f)

Departing from Uslaner (1999), Seippel proposes that the contribution of sport to social capital consists of three processes: “building self-confidence, social contacts and morality lessons” (2006: 173). This draws attention to the ways in which sport may contribute to circumvent marginalisation and contribute to social inclusion. In addition, as social capital is about reciprocity, trust and cooperation, sport may be taken to impact on the participants’ social functioning, including their sense of self and interaction with others.

The functional conception of the applicability of sport points to the notion of social capital; the assumption being that social capital is lacking – or, at least, lagging – and must be formed and increased. The argument is simplistic in postulating “sport can build social capital” without taking the necessary steps to clarify what this promised concept is and what exactly it is expected to do. As will be argued in the following, the challenge posed in the communities in which the two cases are situated is not necessarily a lack of social capital but rather an abundance of *perverse* social capital.

### 5.2.3 The other side of social capital

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In some readings, social capital is generally perceived as “a normatively good thing” that leads to positive benefits for the community (DeFilippis 2001: 786). The downsides are often only touched upon in a limited way:

“Networks and the associated norms of reciprocity are generally good for those inside the network, but the external effects of social capital are by no means always positive ... Social capital ... can be directed toward malevolent, antisocial purposes, just like any other form of capital.” (Putnam 2000: 21-22)

Social capital is inclusive as well as exclusive in that strong bonding social capital can be applied to keep others from participation. As it deals with the values inherent in social relationships, it almost goes without saying that people outside a given social structure does not stand to benefit – perhaps even on the contrary. As such, social capital may be said to contribute to social division.

Another potential drawback to the operation of social capital stems from the norms and values that it implies. Social capital may function as a moral check on behaviour and is thereby connected to social control. Coleman reminds us that “[a] given form of social capital that is valuable in facilitating certain actions may be useless or even harmful for others.” (1988: S98). Consequently, social capital “not only facilitates certain actions; it constrains others” (ibid.: S105). By so doing, it may not only impede what the network or community designate as anti-social behaviour but may have negative consequences for the individual and his or her possibility for optimising their situation.

For the purpose at hand the primary “trouble with social capital” in Putnam’s understanding stems primarily from his community-oriented conceptualisation (cf. Arias 2002). The causality of his line of reasoning may lead to perceive of the challenge as one of creating social capital as to counter the social exclusion of *favela* dwellers. However, this fails to grasp that what is at stake, in reality, is not necessarily the absence of social capital but, rather, the presence of a certain type social capital as exemplified with the criminal networks that seem ubiquitous in the *favelas* (Arias 2002; Arias 2006). The fact is that social capital may serve anti-democratic and violent ends, because relations based in trust, and for that matter fear, are just as determining in the world of crime as in other contexts involving sociability (ibid.; Portes & Landolt 1996). Therefore, the challenge of social capital is not simply be how to create it but how to transform it into a good that really does lead to positive social outcomes.

In a discussion of how violence may at the same time erode, constitute and reconstitute social capital, McIlwaine & Moser calls attention to the distinction between *productive* and *perverse* social capital: Productive social capital generates “favourable outcomes both for its members and for the community at large”, while perverse social capital brings “positive benefits for its members, but in contrast, include[s] negative outcome for wider communities” (2001: 968). It follows that perverse social capital is often linked to social organisations that are “frequently based on the use of force, violence and/or illegal activities” (ibid.); in the current context notably the *facções* operating in the *favelas*. Productive social capital, on the contrary, is relevant when investigating the organisations operating in the field of sport for social good as it is implied that they should not only benefit the participants but the larger community as well.

The schism between productive and perverse social capital furthermore draws attention to the ways in which an agent may move and position himself within a field or social structure. The context and opportunities for action may be perceived as limited in the face of marginalisation, as in the specific context of the *favela*, but it still leaves room for manoeuvring. In fact,

marginalisation presents a challenge but certainly also a chance. The intersection between opportunity and limitation leads to a negotiation of social identity and social navigation, in which the individual participant at the sports-based project is not only positioned but has a prospective of positioning him- or herself. From this follows that social capital may be instrumentalised in order to increase one's social possibilities, in order to become someone. To understand this application of social capital we need to clarify the notion of social identity.

### 5.3 Social identity: Being and becoming

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The concept of social identity is taken from Jenkins (2008) who stresses identity as a process, identification, and thus as a constant (re)negotiation of one's place in the social whole. Sport may be seen as encompassing cultural, symbolic and political significance that potentially impacts on the social relations, actions and world views and, in short, on the identity of an individual or group of individuals (Giulianotti 1999: xii). As sport in its nature is about participation and as such is about relations, sport exemplifies some of the ways in which an individual constitutes his identity – and is constituted by others. Individual as well as group identities are always constructed in a process of “internal-external dialectic of identification”, i.e. in the interplay between one's self-definition and others' definition of oneself, and one's idea of others' perception of oneself and how others' actually perceive one (Jenkins 2008:40).

Any agent has a multifarious identity, or identities, as identification is ongoing. Viewing identity as a process alludes to the dialogue between one's *position*, as the way an individual is situated in a social structure, and one's *positioning*, as the points of possible identification or “suture” (Hall 1990). By being a matter of *identification*, social identity is, thus, a continual negotiation of one's position and positioning.

The construction of social identity takes place in a social setting, through socialisation and interaction. This touches upon the notion of power as it unfolds in the social structure: No agent is ever totally powerless or absolutely powerful and one's position in the social structure, including one's capital, is influenced by the other agents in the structure. Social identity is simultaneously constituted by similarity to the members of a group or network and difference from members of other groups (Jenkins 2008: 17). The inherent comparison and recognition of difference is what constitutes “what we really are”, or rather “what we have become”, thus drawing attention to the fact that identity is not just a matter of the here and now but concerns the future possibilities of becoming as well (Hall 1990: 225).

Power is here understood in the sense of symbolic power, i.e. the power of representation or “legitimate naming” (Bourdieu 1989: 21). Representing someone or something in a specific way is a way of exercising power over that particular subject/object and, thus, influencing on its definition. It is, however, important to note that the symbolic power operates circularly so that “[n]o one – neither its apparent victims nor its agents – can stand wholly outside its field of operation” (Hall 1997: 259ff.). The power of naming comes to the fore when talking about the *favela* and the people living there, as accounted for in the previous chapter. The relevance is evident when discussing matters of identity and empowerment – especially when debating who gets to define who – and is exemplified by the stigma adhered to the *favela* by non-residents and the stressing of the *favela* as a community like any other community by the *moradores*. Substituting *favela* for *comunidade* is an exercise in active identification, a way of positioning oneself instead of being positioned.

As social identity refers to the position an individual holds in a social structure it implies subjective as well as objective understandings. An important position for the task at hand is that of *youth*, a complex and socio-culturally determined position. Youth is not simply a generational but a negotiated position that “unfolds in relation to dynamics of social interaction” (Christiansen et al. 2006:12). Thereby ‘youth’ demonstrates the dynamic between individual agency and objective structure: Young people are neither completely unrestricted of or by their social position.

Here we see the connection between social identity and social capital in that the latter provides leverage for the purpose of becoming; social capital fundamentally impacts on the very positions that an individual finds himself in and the positions he may hold in the future. As social capital may yield symbolic capital the symbolic power may potentially be co-opted by a seemingly powerless individual, e.g. a marginalised person. Identity is always multiple as the agent may claim and be charged with various identities in the various social fields in which he moves. In this sense, identity processes are related to social inclusion as it signifies a prospective being or instant of becoming.

### 5.3.1 Navigating youth

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Borrowing the subtitle of this chapter from Christiansen et al. (2006), directs attention to the variability of the socio-generational category of youth. Age may be nothing more than a number but when passing through the age stages towards adulthood, you are met with a number of expectations just as you have expectations of and for yourself. Such expectations may differ between societies and cultures; however a common notion is that you are your own person, i.e. you are self-contained and fulfil your being – you have become.

Returning to the issue of symbolic power, the objective structure affects on an individual's position in a specifically positive or negative way, or rather result in categories, which in turn may affect an individual's subjective understanding of its social position. Such categorical determination of social positions has often been overlooked (Jenkins 2008: 43). But being positioned negatively by others may in extreme cases lead to social stigma as there is perceivably a gap between the individual's perception of his social identity and others' perception of the concerned individual's social identity. Stigma is defined as a physical or social attribute that devalues an individual's or group's social identity and thereby disqualifies it from respect and positive recognition, in short from social "acceptance" (Goffman 1993 [1963]: 76ff.). Stigma in this sense points to the volatility of identity and the positions that a *morador de favela* may be relegated to.

However, this also implies that there is room for manoeuvring or, rather, for *becoming*, which brings us to the complex task of accounting for how an actor may position himself in order to benefit from his changeable position.

"In Bourdieu's perspective people may move and act vertically in the social topography of a field ... but they generally do so without having to worry about the movement of the field itself" (Vigh 2009: 427).

Turning to the analytical optic of social navigation allows us to direct attention to the complex relationship between an actor and the terrain in which he or she moves (Vigh 2004: 120). Human action and behaviour are often depicted as unfolding in the area of tension between agency and structure when attempting to investigate why people do as they do. Calling attention to the concepts of social field, as outlined above, and 'habitus', "a generative principle of regulated improvisations", Bourdieu offers some insight into the complexity in which actions take place when linking the objective structure in which the habitus is produced to the conjuncture, i.e. to the conditions in which the habitus is operating (2002: 78). The notion of conjuncture signifies how events and circumstances coincide with agency as well as structure and, thus, calls into question rational explanations of human action. The point is that an agent may calculate his actions in an incalculable setting, in a constantly moving terrain, such as a community characterised by marginalisation and fleeting moments of opportunity.

While I am not suggesting that an adult ceases to become, I am arguing that youth is a particular vulnerable social identity as it refers to a phase in life in which you begin locate yourself in society and be recognised as part of society. Youth is as such a position as well as a process (Vigh 2006a: 93). Living in a reality of marginalisation, such as the *favela*, often means that you lack respect and recognition as well as opportunities for finding your place, for becoming. Marginalisation thus

infringes on your prospect of becoming; although steps can be taken to either mitigate the marginalisation or increase the resources of the young person in order to navigate marginalisation.

### 5.3.2 Marginality as terrain

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Navigation is most often taken to refer to landmarks and artefacts, such as maps and GPS devices, although, as Vigh reminds us, the term stems from the Latin *navigare* meaning ‘to sail’ and therefore refers to “the way we move in a moving environment” rather than how we move on a solid surface (2009: 120). In the human and social sciences, navigation designates the more or less conscious way that individuals may act and interact in order to optimise their resources and social positions. Vigh’s concept was conceived in a specific setting of conflict and turmoil in Guinea Bissau in which young people, i.e. young men, had to act and react in order to avoid the “social death” stemming from the lack of possibilities to progress meaningfully in life (Vigh 2006a: 104). There is no conventional war going on in Rio de Janeiro, yet the reality in which the projects unfold is one of insecurity, violence and moratorium; it is a reality that presents limited options for social positioning and becoming. Thereby the concept is deemed highly relevant for the problematic investigated here.

For the purpose at hand, social navigation is applied as conceptualised by Vigh so that it denotes a “motion within fluid and changeable matter” and alludes to how people attempt to steer their life, even as they live in a context of instability due to poverty and conflict (Vigh 2009: 420). Violent conflict and poverty, whether economic or social, is also a feature of many *favelas* and most *moradores* have come to perceive of it as a fact of life. When such turmoil and decline become everyday it becomes “the expected terrain of action” (Vigh 2006a: 149). The context of the *favela* is therefore construed as an instant of an ever-moving terrain in which social opportunities are to be navigated.

Bourdieu argues that an individual’s actions are at the same time shaping and being shaped by the social world and that the “dialectic of objective chances and the agents’ aspirations” produce a “sense of reality” (2002: 164). This sense of reality may change according to changing objective chances – chances that are unpredictable. Therefore, a long-term strategy for bettering one’s position may be replaced by shorter-term tactics or, maybe more fitting, subjective chances.

In order to elucidate social navigation, Vigh invokes the notion of *dubriagem*: A Guinean Creole word that relates to the “push and pull of social forces” (2009: 423). The verb, *dubria*, may be translated into ‘to fend for oneself’, ‘to hedge’ or ‘to escape’ but it may also refer to ‘to clear up’ and

‘to untangle’, i.e. to gain clarity and get out of trouble – all relevant insights into how an individual may act, or rather navigate.

“Seeing one’s life through the act of *dubria* thus allows one to gain a perspective on which way the social environment is moving and how this movement influences one’s course towards both the near and distant future ... [*dubria* directs] our attention towards the tactical practice of navigating social forces and events.” (Vigh 2009: 424)

Departing from de Certeau’s dichotomy between strategy and tactics, Vigh proposes that attention be diverted from strategic to tactical action in order to conceptualise the ways in which an individual applies a flexible course of action to adapt to day-to-day challenges. While a strategy is perceived as “trying to establish a space in which we seek impose and institutionalise our understanding or structuration of the world”, as a way of defining the surrounding space, a tactic is a way of “navigating the spaces of others to our advantage”. (Vigh 2006: 132). In other words, the strategy may set the social structure and the tactic may set the course for moving within that social structure. A tactic addresses a specific, often short-term, objective for what reason tactics, as opposed to strategies, in general are easier to put in place and reverse if needed. *Dubriagem*, thus, points to a flexible, negotiated and adjustable manoeuvring.

Social navigation is related to processes of identity, as the duality in social identification – the *being* and *becoming*, or position and process – is made clear (Christiansen et al. 2006: 11f.; Vigh 2006b: 32ff.). The concept is intimately related to the investigation of how issues of marginality and social inclusion may be influenced by a targeted sports-project. In short, social navigation informs us on how the notions of identity and social capital play out and are optimised in and outside the ring.

## 6 Sport for social good in practice

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One should not be overly optimistic with regards to what sport can do but rather keep an eye on the opportunities and shortcomings that any sports-based social effort is predetermined to involve. In the end, it is not simply sport in itself that leads to positive or negative outcomes but, rather, “the particular blend of *social interactions* and *physical activities* that comprise the *totality of the sport experience*” (Shields & Bredemeier, in Coalter 2007: 132, my emphasis).

What has become increasingly clear to me throughout my research is that sport for social good is not so much a matter of what you do but, rather, how you do it. It comes down to the methodology and, in lieu of a better word, philosophy behind the sports-initiative. The two cases do not constitute mere gyms but are social projects: The objective is not solely to create athletes, although that certainly is the case, but also to create citizens for what reason the organisers at both projects have given consideration to how they work. The *way* the projects are implemented is clearly what separates them from mere sports projects in which you do sport for sport’s sake; here you do sport for your – and your community’s – sake.

### 6.1 It is not just what you do – it is also how you do it

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As already described, a tangible challenge for social life in the communities is the presence of various *facções* that often implicate in particular young, and even adolescent, men. As described by Dowdney (2003) the young people join a gang not because of coercion but because they choose to do it in order to reap certain benefits. This is an immensely important insight as it must be acknowledged that a gang makes up “a context for friendship, play, excitement, channelling energy and a sense of belonging and identity. There is a clear legitimate need for young people to experience these things” (Laureus 2009: 9). With this we may identify the starting point for any sports-based or other project seeking to intervene and engage these young individuals: Sports projects should not try to differentiate from the gang experience as much as emulate some of it in order to allow for social becoming. And boxing may very well be one of the most appropriate sports to apply in the terrain that is the *favela*.

*I think the kind of sport we use is key. Combat sports and particularly boxing are good for working with young people who in other areas of their life may not have been given all that many boundaries or parameters. All of a sudden you put kids in an area they think they understand because it’s boxing – but actually they don’t understand the rules. So it’s a*

*very effective mechanism for getting them to come into the gym to learn those rules and those boundaries.*

Luke Dowdney, Founder & Director of LPP (in Laureus 2009: 11)

But sport alone does not cut it. An insight that was incorporated into the very conception of LPP:

*When Luke started giving boxing lessons, it was of great importance to him to have boxing together with education, with citizenship classes. Not just sport. Not just boxing.*

Juliana Tibau, Project Manager, LPP

The two projects differ fundamentally by the way in which they came to life. While EBRG started out as a boxing gym and *nada mais*, LPP was conceived as a broad-based and targeted sports-based social effort. LPP in this sense started out not as a sport project but as a 'sport plus' project; meaning that sport was not envisaged to stand alone but was to be complemented by parallel efforts to address social issues (Coalter 2007: 71). Further, as it expanded radically, in terms of participants, activities and services, LPP developed its model and structure according to empirical groundwork and participatory involvement and came up with the five pillar approach, as outlined in the introduction: An integrated effort to work with marginalised young people (Figueiredo 2006: 25).<sup>47</sup>

In my view, LPP is highly illustrative of how to construe sport for social good: It offers continuous sports activities of good quality while at the same time providing fundamental access to education, support, service and, maybe most importantly, a positive network of engaged people. Such a holistic endeavour is exactly what potentially makes a positive impact. Sport is the means by which participants get involved – without the offer of sport, it is conceivable that many participants would not show up as evidenced by the 55 % who state that the reason for them joining LPP is that they "like to play sports (boxing)" (LPP 2008). So, no sport no social project. However, the reverse is also true: Without other activities, without the support and other specific practices, no sport for social good. Therefore the sport alone is not determining for the output, the sports-based *project* in its totality is (Crabbe 2008: 18).

The totality of LPP consists of the five pillars of which the two, sports and citizenship classes, dominated the conversations. This does in no way imply a disregard on my part for the other pillars; however, sport is what attracts participants to LPP and citizenship classes are mandatory for what reason my informants naturally talked most about these. When asked to introduce the workings and significance of LPP a 16-year old who had been doing boxing for one and a half years recounted:

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<sup>47</sup> <http://www.fightforpeace.net/projects.php>; Juliana Tibau, Project Manager, LPP.

*[Citizenship classes] are mandatory. Even now. Since I entered the project I have participated in citizenship classes and I am not allowed to skip class. If I skip class I am not allowed to train... Some might think that they come to citizenship class in order to get to train but people come because they like it. Citizenship class is a good thing, it is a dynamic thing – it is not boring. We talk, we discuss various themes. It is very interesting. I learned a lot. It changes a lot of things... Young people sometimes see the world in a certain way, sometimes they do wrong things and [citizenship class] gets them thinking. And it changes their way, changes their lives in a certain direction. At least for me. When I started I was a nervous person... Now I think more, I am more calm. It changes your head, it changes your behaviour. I would not be doing boxing if Luta Pela Paz was not here. It provides a lot of opportunities – you can do boxing for free, they provide you with materials.*

*Aluno, 16 years, LPP*

The manner in which activities unfold is thus important; however, while the implementation is fundamental, it is also irrelevant if access is not established. Access together with availability seems to be the biggest challenges in the communities. One of the young coaches at EBRG summed it up:

*Q: How has the community changed?*

*A: Previously, there was a lot of war, it was dangerous... But now, to visit, it improved a lot, it's much more calm.*

*Q: So, how would you describe the community today?*

*A: It's improving. The kids have opportunities to study. There's sport... There are continuously more opportunities. Instead of staying in the streets, they may enter an academia. It's better.*

*Team member, EBRG*

EBRG may have started out as a regular gym but, as explained earlier, it has turned into a fully fledged community project for which sport is still quintessential but in a different conception. Whereas the practice of boxing used to be a matter of exercising oneself in the sense of shaping up physically, it is now a matter of exercising one's self in the sense of shaping up as social individuals.

*The primary objective for boxing here is not to form athletes and champions, the primary objective is to remove children from the streets and inform them about society and about being men... The point is not to be a fighter, it's a social project first...*

*Team member, EBRG*

A very important aspect of both projects is the linking of sports participation to education. The importance of education is self-evident in relation to social inclusion and countering marginalisation.

*They can enter without studying but as soon as they are here, they are on their way to school. We believe that you should not exclude an aluno who does not study... We accept the ones who do not study and we act as a bridge between the aluno and school.*

Team member, LPP

LPP may not require *alunos* to be in school; however, taking part in citizenship classes is mandatory. This is in order to structure the participation and making sure that the *alunos* reflect upon the things they learn in boxing class. There is a definite correlation between the activities, the pillars, and the social output of project.

*Luta Pela Paz is not just about boxing. It's not just capoeira. It's not just luta livre, nor is it just education. It's not just computer studies or citizenship classes, access to the work market or teaching young people leadership. It's all of this. They're various components that when they are combined give a young person the best possible chance to achieve his space in a society from which he is excluded.*

Luke Dowdney, Founder & Director, LPP (in Fight for Peace 2006)

The approach of LPP levels the playing field, so to speak, by providing comprehensive room for manoeuvring. In essence, LPP allows for social navigation.

Contrary to LPP, EBRG insists that *alunos* go to school and while this insistence function to exclude, it should still be taken as a means to making a difference in the lives of the *alunos* and to contribute to the community in a positive manner. This may in itself be seen as a social contribution; however, there is no follow-up regarding how the *alunos* are actually doing in school and there exists no formalised cooperation between EBRG and the local public school (SOLTEC 2009: 39). Complicating things is the quality of available schooling:

*It would be cool if we could have other activities here as well, for instance tutoring for the children. Because the school here in Vidigal isn't very good... The kids who participate here have to study but to study is one thing, to learn is another. Sometimes, when a child has to write his name on the form [to register at the academia], he doesn't know how to. School tutoring would be good. Also cidadania to learn about the world. It would be good... If you can't even write your name, how are you going to be something?*

Team member, EBRG

EBRG simply does not have the means to offer anything but boxing classes, but through the sports participation, *alunos* are included in a network that encourages them to stay in school. There is clearly an understanding among *alunos* of the significance of school in order to become someone. I only spoke briefly with an *aluno* while he was waiting for his boxing class to start:

*Q: What do you talk about with the coaches?*

*A: We talk a lot about school. About staying in school, about improving our grades in order to continue to faculdade.*

*Aluno, EBRG*

And in the words of a somewhat shy 13-year old who had started boxing 3 months earlier:

*Q: How do you like school?*

*A: There are some boring things at school but you can't skip class – you are not allowed to [in order to participate at EBRG]. You have to be respectful [of school].*

*Q: Do you feel any different about school since you started here?*

*A: Boxing made a difference in school. You have to avoid wrangles and I used to wrangle a lot...*

*Q: What would you like to do when you grow up?*

*A: I would like to be a professional football player.*

*Q: And what if you don't become that?*

*A: Then you have to diversify. You have to study like crazy!*

*Aluno, 13 years, EBRG*

While I am not suggesting that participating in sport is a panacea, I am agreeing with Lever's suggestion that it "can lead (indirectly) to increased educational or occupational attainment" (1983: 131). This is so because of the social setting, or rather the field, in which sport takes place. Whether an individual completes his education is not simply a matter of a "school vocation", but rather contingent on being removed from the street and having a supportive network (Silva 2003: 130). In the social field that is the *academia*, the *alunos* build and transform social capital by learning about and, more importantly, reflecting upon the social requirements and obstacles they face and thereby they may realise their opportunities for social becoming.

*I started here when I was 14 years and [the director] always talked about the importance of studying... And now I obtained a bolsa (bursary) for college. It isn't impossible. I always tell [the alunos, 'If you look, you'll find. Nothing comes from not trying'].*

*Team member, EBRG*

EBRG and LPP make a tangible and highly positive contribution to the communities alone through their geographical location and being free of charge. The fact is that many young people, due to various factors including lack of capital, social exclusion and stigma, do not leave their communities in search of alternatives.

A central aspect of any social field is that the positioning, that continuously takes place, is subject to regulation; it is governed *inter alia* by social norms, i.e. by rules that regulate behaviour and

attitudes. Therefore, in order to enter and position oneself in a field, and increase one's possibility for social becoming, one needs to know and understand the relevant rules.

## 6.2 Rules of the game

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*In life there are rules and in sport, in boxing, there are many rules!*

Team member, EBRG

Rules may be established as social rules, i.e. as norms and values that regulate behaviour, and as sports rules, i.e. as the practical regulation of sporting practices. While many sports studies have dealt with the latter, I investigate the former in the conception of rules as primarily social rules; in effect as “values over and above mere rules” (Read & Bingham 2009: xv).

As previously accounted for, sport has a functional role in transmitting social values and norms and this functionality may lead to positive as well as negative outputs for what reason the organisation and underlying values of a given project is all-important. If organised and targeted, sport may function as a template for social interaction and central to this is that sport teaches social skills. I shall therefore turn to a highly practical yet intangible aspect of the organising or structuring of a sports-based project: The role of rules for the constitution of social identity – when adhering to boxing rules you identify yourself as a pugilist. By adhering to rules, by absorbing appropriate action, an individual is not simply controlled but may exert more control; individuals may be more at ease with others as well as with themselves and thereby affect on their position and positioning (Crabbe 2009: 189).

*In the ring there are many things to remember to do and many rules you have to adhere to. And the rules in boxing help in formation of persons... A child has to learn the fundamental rules, to follow rules. It is collaboration with the intent of assisting the formation of the child.*

Team member, EBRG

There is a difference between the identity of pugilist and the identity of e.g. schoolchild; however the rules learned in the one field may be transferred to the other just as the identity of *lutador* may be applied outside of the *academia* in order to distinguish oneself from e.g. the identity as *bandido*. Rules are in this sense coupled with social identity as they not only regulate the behaviour of the individual but are applied in order to position oneself; the rules of a being must be embodied in order to affect identification – to construct a certain social identity that allows navigating different social fields, in short: to become. Social identity is a process in which an actor can take on multiple

identities: An identity, such as ‘pugilist’, involves “an array of associated roles” (Jenkins 2008: 164) in and outside of the *academia* and may include that of role model, respectful schoolchild and non-brawler.

*Q: Did you learn something here that you can use outside of the academia?*

*A: No. You are not allowed to fight outside of the academia!*

*Q: I know that you are not allowed to use the boxing itself but did you learn other things that you can use?*

*A: Respect. And discipline. Many things.*

*Aluno, 11 years, EBRG*

When I asked the *alunos*, at either *academia*, whether they had learned something which they could also use in other contexts, every single one would stress a cardinal rule of boxing: As a practitioner of a combat sport, you are not to make use of your physical skills outside of the *academia*. Boxing is about fighting but only in the ring, subjected to the rules of the ring. However, when talking about what they considered the most important lessons learnt at the *academia*, many would point out “respect” and “knowing how to behave”, both integral aspects of social skills or social rules. Most *alunos* proceeded to acknowledge how they benefited from these social skills at home, in school, when meeting people and so on. As such the notion of rolling with the punches, which indicates an embodied practice that is essential for navigating the ring, can be translated into a social practice necessary for navigating society.

*Q: Have you learned anything besides boxing?*

*A: When doing boxing you learn other things as well because boxing involves many rules.*

*There are things you are not allowed to do. You learn to respect rules – this is also very important. When you start doing boxing, you learn to respect rules...*

*Q: What does it mean to respect rules?*

*A: You know how to behave, how to be with different people.*

*Aluno, EBRG*

The participants can be said to enter into an agreement when they sign up regarding which rules to adhere to not just at the *academia* but outside as well; an agreement that inevitably results in a change of behaviour in and out of the *academia*. There is a distinction between the *alunos* at LPP and EBRG in terms of their reflections regarding their learning – this distinction is surely due to the fact that LPP has mandatory citizenship classes while EBRG offers no such forum for critical reflection.

While the investigation of rules in sport has most often dealt with the governance and institutionalisation of sport, rules at the two *academias* are reflective of how the sport activities are framed by a vision of what the participants may become, as summarised by one coach:

*We don't only teach to fight here, to enter the ring and fight. We teach how to grow into men in the future... The [alunos] turn into well-behaved citizens... not just because of the boxing but also because they do other sports.*

Team member, EBRG

A final important insight regarding rules is that they are not primarily formulated in legislation but are mostly unarticulated and visible only through learned practice (Baarts 2003: 48). While any boxing gym constitutes a highly tangible training ground where the participant learns the craft of boxing through hour upon hour of training in order to internalise the techniques and rules and discipline himself and his body, the two specific *academias* also serve as examples of how boxing functions as a “normative training ground” (Giulianotti 2005: xii). Socialisation, together with social inclusion, constitutes learning processes in which the social rules, the norms and values of a social field, are co-opted and incorporated.

*What we teach here is that the fighter luta (fights) in the ring with equipment and rules – rules he has to follow. In streets, you have brigas (scuffles) and one who fights in the street is not an athlete, he is not a pugilist. He is a vagabundo (bum)... We never refuse anyone from participating. If someone isn't right, he only comes here 1, 2, 3 times. If a malandro (rascal) enters, he leaves again, and he leaves alone.*

Raff Giglio, Founder & Director, EBRG

Interestingly, in practice, the goods that make up social capital are not just ‘connections’ (Bourdieu 1986) but also responsibilities to do and act in a certain way; e.g. you have to stay in school in order to participate at EBRG. This is a form of social control – and is a step in an empowerment process: Act in a certain way to act on your own. With this, we are reminded that social capital may function as a social control (cf. Coleman 1988) but may also be co-opted in order to be in control.

A popular maxim within social capital theory is that “it's not *what* you know – it's *who* you know”. I maintain that both are equally important as the above exposition certainly deals with *what* you know – and how you may use what you know. However, I shall now turn to *who* you know; more specifically *who* constitutes an example for you to follow.

## 6.3 Heroes and role models: “An example is worth more than anything”<sup>48</sup>

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“after food, water, shelter, health and education, nothing is more important for future development than providing good role models for our youths” (Munro, in Coalter 2009: 63).

The primary role model for any child is its parent or guardian, who is in charge of the fundamental socialisation. However, the involvement of the parents in the social development of their children can pose difficulties – something that was touched upon at EBRG:

*Q: Do your parents sometimes come here?*

*A: My mother does not come here often. She gets up early to go to work – it’s far. And when she comes home she is very tired...*

*Q: And what about your father?*

*A: My father does not live with me.*

*Aluno, 14 years, LPP*

It is not because they are not interested, but they simply do not have the time:

*Q: Do the parents come here?*

*A: There aren’t a lot of parents here... The kids come here to see and ask if they can participate. And they need their parents to sign an authorization form. Most parents come only to sign [the form permitting their kid to participate]. 98 % sign the form and they never show themselves here at the academia.*

*Q: Would you like more parents to show up?*

*A: It would be cool if the parents would come to watch more often because it makes the kids try to do better... It gives me incentive when my parents are involved. But it’s hard. I don’t know if it’s because of a lack of interest - I think it’s because of their work.*

*Q: Would it be better if the parents...?*

*A: Definitely! The incentive would be really big. A kid relies a lot on his father and mother to know right from wrong... If you have people on your side that does things with you, it’s better.*

*Team member, EBRG*

EBRG actually held their very first parents’ meeting during my fieldwork; about 80 invitations were distributed by the *alunos*, only 15 parents showed up. I am not suggesting that parents are abandoning or failing their children; in fact, a couple of *alunos* mentioned how it had been their parents who suggested that they started boxing. However, in order to provide for the family, many parents and guardians have to work long hours – compounded by sometimes excruciating travel hours – and therefore do not have the possibility to guide their offspring’s social becoming.

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<sup>48</sup> Team member, EBRG.

*We think that working together with the family is extremely important. We are not just dealing with the alumno. The alumno is followed by a family, by problems and other things, and the parents want to know how to help too.*

Team member, LPP

In order to work together with the family, LPP has a social worker that will engage with the family of the individual *alunos* by going to their homes if the parents cannot come to the *academia*, for instance because of their work schedule. But even with this involvement of the family, between public schools of dubious quality and a lack of quality leisure activities in many communities, the challenge is still which examples that are left for the children and young people to follow?

*A: Do you consider yourself an example to be followed?*

*Q: I guess I am an example for others because I came here and did not know anything and now I am a competitor and even a coach. I came here and knew nothing and I learned a lot.*

*A: So, you're an example as a lutador?*

*Q: I don't think I'm an example just because I'm a lutador but also because I'm a good guy.*

Team member, EBRG

The symbolic position of the hero, as someone who overcomes odds and succeeds, in boxing myth-making is almost conspicuous (Wacquant 2004). The hero is most often a victor and as such the *lutadores* (fighters), especially the champions, hold a prominent place in the imagination of the other *alunos* with regards to being someone. Every competitive fighter put his position, his identity as *lutador*, into words and a common sentiment was that:

*An athlete is an athlete. He's not a normal person, he's different. As an athlete you have to live your life in a certain way: early to bed, no alcohol... You are always serving as an example.*

*Lutador, 19 years, EBRG*

Wacquant argues that “[s]acrifice is the key notion in the boxer’s professional ideology” (1995: 75). Sacrifice is to stay on the narrow path of discipline. It is certainly so for the *lutadores* and *profesores* at the two *academias* who know that they not only serve as heroes but even more so as role models. This position might be a tricky one seeing that they are always visible to the community; they live and socialise there with their *alunos* as neighbours. Therefore, I will argue that the ‘sacrifice’ may not solely be professional but, more importantly, social.

*As a professor it is important to provide [the alumnos] with examples so they know how to meet their next with respect, how to live with rules.*

The hero is here a role model, an individual who through social relationships serve as examples to inspire and encourage certain behaviour; in short, a role model that is “worthy of imitation” (Payne et al. 2002: 4). Both projects have their share of role models, though it is not necessarily articulated explicitly: At EBRG the *profesores* did acknowledge being role models and as such striving to be examples for the *alunos*. However, without further formation, e.g. as social workers, they simply adhere to the “rules of athleticism”, by which I mean that they live a proper and disciplined life for the *alunos* and everyone else to see. As Dewalt et al. remind us: “Observing the behavior of others around us and participating in our society lead to our knowledge of correct and incorrect behavior” (1998: 265). The conduct of the *profesores* and other team members and the observation of this conduct by the *alunos* function as a socialising strategy as well as navigational tactic.

In order to serve their purpose, role models must provide and inspire targets, something to aspire to, while at the same time taking on a quality that is attainable; the inspired should have a feeling that their aspirations may come true. The importance of role models lays in the fact that they embody the values and skills prized by the project and in practice function as an outreach platform to draw in and engage participants.

*Q: How did you start to do boxing?*

*A: I came here one day to get a drink of water and the coach asked me if I would like to do something, if I wanted to take part in any activity.*

*Q: Did you know anyone here?*

*A: I didn't know anyone here... Now I know everybody.*

*Aluno, 14 years, LPP*

However, the role models do not simply function as examples, as sporting heroes often do, but take on an active role in that they *interact* with the *alunos* on a daily or at least regular basis – the role models are, in short, *present*.

*The coaches are cool. We talk a lot with them. We talk about school, about boxing, about many things. They converse a lot with us.*

*Aluno, 15 years, EBRG*

The availability of role models at the two *academias* means that the *alunos* are not “bowling alone” but have engaged people on their side that do not simply tell them what to do and how to do it but converse with and challenge them about it (cf. Putnam 2000). As such, the “modelling” takes place in a context of interaction, i.e. a “real live environment that embraces the behaviour” (Payne et al. 2002: 7).

*A: The coach is the foundation of your incentive. It is like parent-child. You respect, you listen, you talk.*

*Q: What do you talk about?*

*A: If you are sad or you need to talk to someone, you can always call [some of the team members]. They always converse with you, they will give you an opinion, they will ask you and listen to you. In the academia it seems like a big family. Everybody knows everybody. Everybody talks with everybody.*

*Q: Do you talk to anybody in particular here?*

*A: [The youth worker] is very cool. She is like us because she started as an alumno. So she already has this way of conversing with you. We can talk about everything, if anything is bothering you, if you are worried. Sometimes she sees you looking sad and she will come up to you and say, 'What is going on? Please talk to me'. That is really good.*

*Aluno, 16 years, LPP*

The notion of mentor may be more appropriate to describe what actually takes place. Consequently, it is not merely what you do and how you do it – it is also *whom* that does it.

*Q: Do you have someone that you look up to here in the community?*

*A: All the professores here...*

*Q: How are they examples to you?*

*A: They are all lutadores... I would like to become a lutador myself.*

*Q: What have you learned from them?*

*A: Many things. How to train. How to act... I would like to be a role model – especially when I have children.*

*Aluno, 15 years, EBRG*

The role models consciously and unconsciously convey normative messages by the way they act and interact (Payne et al. 2002: 13); something that every team member at LPP and EBRG seems very aware of. This is especially notable in the way that people converse with each other – always in a respectful manner. I never heard any condescending utterances, not even when instructors told e.g. noisy children to be quieter, and I never experienced anyone being asked to leave the premises, or at least step out of the gym. Both *academias* seemed like inclusionary places – with a very notable exception: EBRG's resolute barring of female *alunos*. This draws attention to a central problematic: Sport may convey positive as well as negative values. Most likely due to the absence of girls it is possible to trace a certain “macho trend” among the *professores* at EBRG which unfortunately passes on to the *alunos* (SOLTEC 2009: 38). Again, we are reminded that *how* you do it is pivotal, and that the role models should continuously stay alert to which values should, and should not, be transmitted. In short, they must recognise their role.

*Q: What does it mean to be a role model?*

*A: We have to do things right, so [the children] can see how to do it right.*

*Q: Like what?*

*A: Be respectful. No drinking or making trouble in the street. Know how to talk to different people. Live our lives right.*

Team member, EBRG

A very important factor is that the role models at the two projects are not just from the community but that they, just as the projects themselves, were “created” in and by the community in the sense that there exists a high sense of ownership among the participant. When you work from within people feel responsible – and proud – something that was supported by various informants:

*You can ask any person here: ‘Do you know Luta Pela Paz?’; ‘I know it’. People are proud of it. The academia is a pride in the community. People are proud of the projects that exist here in the community.*

*Aluno, 16 years, LPP*

The recognition that comes with creating champions from scratch is also not to be forgotten. In continuation hereof stems the significant fact that the *professores* at EBRG have not only been trained and certified as coaches at EBRG, but they have practically been raised there as well.<sup>49</sup>

“The capacity to inspire young people into transformative action is tied to the identification of realisable goals which capture the imagination... there is no better role model than those who have themselves graduated from being project participant to project employee.”  
(Crabbe 2005: 96)

The importance of “home-grown” role models was stressed at EBRG by a comparison to LPP:

*A: They [LPP] do not focus enough on their competitors. They are most important as role models.*

*Q: But in Maré you are a role model the minute you refrain from taking an arm in hand?*

*A: That’s true... But the lutador should not be forgotten.*

Team member, EBRG

This does not simply allude to the importance of *lutadores* as role models but refers to the practical demonstration of accomplishment. The *lutadores* are a tangible and highly visible output of the

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<sup>49</sup> The founder and director of EBRG is the only boxing instructor in Rio de Janeiro recognised by the Brazilian Boxing Federation and the State Boxing Federation to provide training courses to certify new boxing coaches. Training courses for boxing coaches are staged annually and Mr. Giglio usually invites one of his *alunos* to participate free of charge.

social capital at the *academia* as the *lutador* is a result of the relationships he has entered into – and when he competes every onlooker will have a vision of what you can become.

And LPP in fact supports this insight. One example is a *lutador* born in Maré, formed at LPP and currently living in São Paulo because he made the Brazilian national selection, although he regularly visits home:

*Roberto is like a mirror to us... Everybody wants to fight and wants to fight well and get to where he is. And in order to do that you have to train and train and train.*

*Aluno, 16 years, LPP*

Roberto was a name that regularly came up at LPP, while at EBRG the names of its most accomplished *lutadores*, including one who at the time of research was the Brazilian champion, kept coming up as examples of what the *alunos* would like to accomplish and what they thought it would take to accomplish it – to become like them. The *aluno* above continued:

*When I started I sparred with girls, with boys, with everyone. I practised with the ones who knew more than me because I wanted to improve every day. It was good for me, I improved and today I am a competidora (female competitor)...*

*Aluna, 16 years, LPP*

You do not become a champion through your own hard work alone – rather it is a collaboration based on reciprocity and trust. This is so because no fighter is formed in solitude – there is always the coach, the mentor, the sparring partner, the friends, the rivals. Such social relationships demonstrate the centrality of respect. In fact, “[r]eciprocity, trust and most forms of social capital rest heavily of mutual respect (Halpern 2005: 320).

*I wonder if it's because of all the talk of respect [at EBRG] but there simply seems to be an aura of positive and mutual respect over the place... Respect, not awe... because even the youngest alunos seem to be comfortable and confident around the coach and the project workers. I don't get the impression of a rigid "hierarchy" (for lack of a better word)...*

*Observation notes, LPP, 28 October 2009*

Respect is a matter of engagement, of trust, of cooperation and, ultimately, of social identity. This points to how the notion of respect is inherent in social relations and, as such, central to the concept of social capital.

The importance of positive role models in the contexts of the two cases cannot be underestimated as it might be claimed that “the model of success for these children, unfortunately, is the drug

dealer who has money” (Jornal do Brasil 2009b). While this is a crude and somewhat exaggerated presentation of reality, the fact remains that the presence of the drug dealers in the communities do impact on the choices made by young people in terms of who they identify themselves with and how they navigate with regards to optimise their position. However, the two *academias* are on familiar turf, so to say, with their stressing of interactional aspects, of which the perhaps most important one, respect, is investigated in the following.

## 6.4 R-e-s-p-e-c-t

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In the course of my research, one word kept turning up: Respect. While it is an often invoked notion when describing what it means to be marginalised or why young, mostly male, persons choose to join a gang, it also seems to capture at least a modicum of what it is that sport for social good can do – and how it does it.

*In every academia that teaches martial arts you'll learn a lot about respect. An athlete learns to respect others.*

*Aluno, 19 years, EBRG*

What has become clear to me is that respect in boxing is mutual – you have to acknowledge that your respect stems not just from your talent and accomplishments, but also from the reciprocal (inter)action you are involved in with your opponent, your coach and, for that matter, your followers. Boxing may be a truly individual sport but its “adequate apprenticeship is quintessentially collective” (Wacquant 2004: 16).

*We have to show respect in order to be respected.*

*Team member, EBRG*

When conversing with *alunos* about what they had learned at the *academia*, many *alunos* would start talking about *respeito* (respect) and when asked how they felt at the *academia*, many would say that they felt *respeitado* (respected). In fact, *respeito* and *respeitado* are possibly the most common noun and adjective, respectively, referred to by all of my informants – and both apply to an overwhelmingly positive appreciation.

*Respect is for your entire life... Knowing respect, it's the best thing in the world today*

*Aluno, EBRG*

Through the research I have come to realise that respect both signifies a personal process of self-estimation, including self-concept, and a social process in which respect indicates an act of estimation towards another person or group of persons. Whether focusing on respect as respecting oneself or respecting others it comes to the fore in social relationships. One reason for this is that respect may be invoked as a matter of behaviour or conduct.

*Q: What did you learn here apart from boxing?*

*A: Damn, I've learned so many things here. I have learned to respect people more. I've learned to be with different kinds of people... To respect is knowing how to differentiate – in your treatment of people. Knowing how to behave, when to be serious...*

*Aluno, 17 years, EBRG*

In this sense, respect is linked to the notion of rules; respect is central to participation as demonstrated *inter alia* by LPP's rules.

*Respect and help others*

*Be disciplined and punctual*

*Be responsible*

*Train with seriousness and responsibility*

*Take responsibility for the material*

*Be peaceful inside and outside of the academia*

*Be humble, honest and polite*

*Admit own errors*

*Be united*

*Have respect for opponents*

*Know to speak and learn to listen*

*Have love of the project's shirt*

*Receive people from outside the academia with respect and kindness*

*'Rules of the academia', LPP, poster hanging in the gym*

When conversing with the boxing coach at LPP, who is not originally from Maré or even from Rio de Janeiro, he used the notion of respect to put the reality, or even the terrain, into perspective.

*Q: What is the most important thing that the alunos learn here?*

*A: Respect. They respect a lot. This is a world where everyone respects a lot. The world outside is different. In São Paulo it was very different... Here everyone has to respect everyone... In the city it is different than here in the community. Here in the community everyone has to respect everyone, no one is allowed to mess with anyone, no one is allowed to rob anyone. It is a different world.*

*Team member, LPP*

In the *favela* respect is often perceived in relation to the activities of the *facções*, where respect is a matter of security; both inside the gang which is based on a hierarchy of respect and inside the community where respect often signifies the reciprocal, almost symbiotic, relationship of the *facção* to the community: To make sure that the community puts up with, or even protects, a particular *facção*, its members need to be respectful of the community and its needs while the community, in turn, by respecting, or at least accepting, the presence of the *facção* enjoys protection as well as some, albeit limited, services from the *facção*.<sup>50</sup> However, the reciprocity has changed in many communities in recent years due to frequency of hostile take-overs by different *facções*, resulting in decreasing social capital between the community and the *facção*. Nevertheless, the fact remains that the ones who decide what you are allowed to do or not, as referred to by the boxing coach above, are the *facções* in the absence of an alternative authority.

In the *favela* respect, especially as a young male, often stems from being member of a gang (Dowdney 2003; Barker 2008). This is, however, a negative conception of respect, more akin to the notion of fear, and, as Perlman (2004) points to, the increasing levels of violence and the experience of fear and insecurity in many *favela* communities – one of the effects of the continuous war-like context in many *favelas* and the sometimes ensuing replacement of one *facção* with another – results in the erosion of trust, social relations and networks. This is the reality in Maré today and was the reality in Vidigal in 2005. Consequently, it can be argued that the work undertaken at the two projects run counter to these effects by subverting such a negative conception of respect in addition to running counter to the perverse social capital entailed by the *facções*. The notion of respect applied in sport for social good is namely related not to fear but to its counterpart: Trust – a quintessential aspect of productive social capital.

*The project has the objective, the power, to pull young people away from misery and bring them joy. And give them self-esteem. Here they are told, 'You will make it because I trust you'. That's what they told me, 'You will make it because I trust you'. When young people are met with trust – when they hear that word – they are going to reach it. That's what I think.*

*Aluno, 16 years, LPP*

When people meet and engage in a respectful manner, trust and its ally, cooperation, have better conditions. Respect in this sense becomes integral to the very participation. Participation is, however, not as decisive as how you participate. A social project, like the two cases, will teach a lot

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<sup>50</sup> This protection can even be perceived to be from the police, who abstain from entering the community. The disheartening fact is that a great number of *favela* dwellers, as well as non-*favela* dwellers, do not trust the police (cf. Dowdney 2003).

about respecting others – a “positive respect”, as in a productive social capital, that may otherwise be hard to come by in the *favela*.<sup>51</sup>

One *aluno*, who had described his uneasiness in the community because he felt targeted by other young people, did not concur with the above depiction provided by his *professor*:

*I don't think that there is a lot of respect in the community. In the community one person messes with another. There is violence all the time. In here, inside the project, there is respect – everyone is respectful of another.*

*Aluno, 14 years, LPP*

By participating in the projects, *alunos* at both EBRG and LPP clearly felt that they had learned to respect and was respected in turn – an indication of the productive social capital at the *academias*.

*The atmosphere at both turmas was once again really good, full of respect... Sometimes it seems as a different world in which people are more considerate, polite, serious in their efforts...*

Observation notes, EBRG, 5 November 2009

While fear is something you invoke, respect is something you earn or gain. Respect is a highly symbolic good and thus a form of capital. Symbolic capital may be defined as the resources available to an individual on the basis of honour, prestige or recognition; in short it is “the form that the various species of capital assume when they are perceived and recognised as legitimate” (Bourdieu 1977; 1989: 17). Focussing on respect brings out the mutuality of the various forms of capital; capital is accumulated in a social field and may potentially be exchanged for other forms of capital in that, and perhaps another, field. However, without engaging in relationships with others, an agent cannot cash in his or her capital. This directs attention to the central notion of recognition. Recognition is fundamentally about social identity in the sense that you are recognised, and in turn recognise others, as you are positioned and position yourself. Recognition may be conceived in both positive and negative ways: A negative notion of recognition is akin to the notion of stigma as elaborated on in the analytical frame (cf. Goffman 1993); while a positive recognition acknowledges the person you present yourself as. The reason for the centrality of respect in sport for social good is its connection to positive recognition and to social visibility and, hence, to one’s position and positioning in society – and through this to one’s social identity. Recognition also illuminates navigational routes. Bourdieu succinctly explains:

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<sup>51</sup> Team member, NDM.

“The reproduction of social capital presupposes an unceasing effort of sociability, a continuous series of exchanges in which recognition is endlessly affirmed and reaffirmed.” (1986a).

Symbolic capital is further “a credit; it is the power granted to those who have obtained sufficient recognition to be in a position to impose recognition” (Bourdieu 1989: 23). By acquiring social capital and converting it into symbolic capital, such as respect, you are in a position to further build social, and potentially other forms of, capital. This brings us back to the centrality of respect for any process of positive recognition: To be respected means to be recognised as a being (for what you are) as well as for becoming (for what you are doing).

You cannot simply *be* a pugilist – you *become* a pugilist by learning the trade, so to speak. A fundamental aspect of boxing is therefore training: Through training *bodily capital*, understood as “the specific capital constituted of one’s physical resources”, is created and recreated (Wacquant 2007: 127). By acquiring the bodily capital and by embodying the social practice, one may *become* a pugilist (Wacquant 2004). But the social practice that is manifested through training, or, in fact, praxis, is also crucial in order to position oneself as a social being, which alludes to the relevance of boxing as a social instrument. Respect is simply ingrained into the practice of boxing: To show respect is tantamount to having learned the practice, to having internalised the rules of the game. I argue that respect, both as being respected and as being respectful, signifies a convergence of bodily capital and symbolic capital in that the social skills come to the fore. This convergence only takes place exactly because the practice of boxing is a social endeavour, which is to say that participating at an *academia* may create – and transform – social capital. This in turn promotes the creation of bodily, human as well as symbolic capital – and potentially also economic capital as demonstrated by the team members at both *academias*; by the *lutadores*, *professores* and youth leaders who serve as examples of how you may optimise your resources in the social field that is the *academia* and redeem them in other social fields.

In essence, what the two projects do is to provide an alternative to being on the “street”, where there are few chances of social becoming, by allowing participants to acquire respect and a sense of accomplishment in a *productive* manner. Thereby the participants are included in a social structure, in which they must adhere to specific norms and values, as in any social structure, and by so doing they are included – they get to play a role. With this the *academias* provide a sense of belonging – just as the gang may provide a young man with a sense of belonging (Barker 2005: 40) – in addition to allowing for a social becoming through the building and transformation of social capital.

## 7 In and out of the ring

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*I think that boxing – and this is not just here but in various places of the world – is the sport that best takes children away from the streets and from marginalisation.*

Team member, EBRG

The statement above may exemplify the kind of ‘mythopoeia’ that ought to be avoided when attempting to explain the social role of sport (cf. Coalter 2007). While the advice is warranted, I do think that boxing is a highly relevant instrument in the given context. As previously argued the practice of boxing is an excellent means to impact on behaviour and impart respect while also drawing out a sense of self-importance and self-respect. And boxing does this “in a way frequently not open to a kid whose other social influences offer few of these perceived positive forces and experiences.” (Maguire et al. 2002: 170). By participating in the projects, the participants gain access not only to sports, but to a network of resources.

Sport is related to social capital because it is fundamentally about participation; it is about entering into a relationship with other people, whether colleagues, opponents, facilitators or spectators. In the previous I have dealt with aspects of the socialisation that takes place at the *academias*, now I turn to the benefits for the participants in terms of gaining resources, notably social capital, and applying them in a process of social becoming.

### 7.1 The *academia* as a source of social capital

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It should be borne in mind that there is a difference between the source and the effect of social capital (Portes & Landolt 1996; 2000). The *academias* are here seen as the sources of social capital, or rather as fields in which social capital is formed and transformed. As demonstrated *inter alia* by the formation of *lutadores* the outcome of social capital may be conceived as both specific resources to be obtained and invested and as the concrete working together, including the communication and positive collective action (Nicholson & Hoye 2008: 5f.).

Sport for social good is not just a matter of sport or sport participation, but is about how the sports activities unfold. For this reason I argue that the social capital formed, and perhaps transformed, at the *academias* is at least somewhat fungible in other fields. This is so because the social norms applied inside the *academia* are conceived as applicable outside the *academia* as well. As I have touched upon in the previous chapter, several informants corroborate that they can and do use the things they have learned at class in other social fields as well. One example is how *alunos* bring

along their sense of respect and self-respect when they leave class and apply and trade it at school, at home or in the street. As respect is intimately connected to social relations it may be argued that respect is a part of the social capital of the *academias*. In this sense, some of the social capital is transferable to other social fields.

By providing access to the social capital that exists in the social field that is the *academia*, the two projects offer a first step towards social inclusion. This is so because of the mentoring *alunos* receive as part of or besides the boxing training as elaborated on in the previous chapter.

*A lot of people talk to me because they trust me. There are some people who come here and say, 'I don't want to talk to that person, I hate that person'. But in here the barriers break down... There are 16 communities here divided between two facções. But people meet in here. Then, the project breaks barriers. We are all equal. We are different communities with different factions but we are all equal. There is no difference... I say like this: If you want to be better than another person you have to treat your next good.<sup>52</sup>*

Aluna and youth leader, 16 years, LPP

The importance of having positive relations to adults as well as other young people should not be underestimated. As outlined in the previous chapter, positive role models may be few and far between and to engage actively with a positive role model results in a very tangible form of social capital. Social capital exists only in and because of social relationships – in some readings social capital is equated to the sum of one's social relationships. Boxing seems to be a paradox as a means for social good because it seems a quintessential individual sport. However, it is contingent on a social apprenticeship (cf. Wacquant 2004).

*[Boxing] is an individual sport. In a fight there is only one person in the ring but to prepare he depends on his friend. He can't prepare himself for competition without a colleague... Sparring and training. They go into the ring against each other but they are all friends.*

Team member, EBRG

Sparring is reciprocity in effect and brings about the key insight that cooperation and trust is necessary to succeed – as a fighter but also as a citizen. At both *academias*, the interaction with the *alunos* is paramount and by bringing people together in a structured manner it is clear that the presence of dedicated (dedication is also a form of capital) team members is decisive for the realisation of the 'social' in social capital (Jarvie 2008:107). As the role models and key project workers are from the communities, the *alunos* recognise them – and are in turn recognised – which furthers the process of bonding and impacts on processes of identity as well as becoming.

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<sup>52</sup> In fact, there are three *facções* operating in the 16 communities in Complexo da Maré.

But can the identification be too much so as to close other people out? Some warn that bonding social capital can lead to exclusion of outsiders and to overly strong in-group ties, and that bridging social capital is a determinant for social inclusion (Putnam 2000). However, I argue that this should be determined from case to case. When facing marginalisation and exclusion, when, in effect, lacking social capital in one field, young people may try to compensate by building social capital in another field. Such compensation, or optimisation under the social circumstances, is an objective of social navigation. In this sense, looking towards gang membership is a practical example of social navigation (Deuchar 2009: 99; Vigh 2004; 2009). While it must be stressed that the vast majority of young people who are marginalised and excluded do not turn to neither crime nor violence; the fact is that they will look for a way to make themselves count.

”If sports clubs are capable of developing certain types of bonding social capital (and this requires further investigation), then, in certain circumstances, this may be viewed as a positive, if limited, contribution to social regeneration – perhaps an essential first step for certain marginal and vulnerable groups” (Coalter 2007: 67).

Bridging social capital denotes relations formed across diverse social groups and hence links to external resources. For this reason bridging is often considered fundamental to social *integration* (Putnam 2000; NSD 2009: 13). However, when bonding with “people like us”, i.e. people who are facing similar challenges or who find themselves in similar life circumstances, confidence and trust more easily ensure – a prerequisite for social *inclusion*.<sup>53</sup> In fact there is no schism between bonding and bridging social capital but rather convergence in terms of building relationships. Both may be equally hard to come by, especially in the *favela*, and both are equally important to creating a fundamental shift in one’s life situation and furthering social wellbeing.

Even before external occurrences, such as the previously mentioned violence, had deterred paying *alunos* from EBRG, the *academia* had turned into a semi-social initiative as the classes had already been separated into “paying classes” and “social project classes”, as accounted for in chapter 3.<sup>54</sup> While such separation may be detrimental to building bridging social capital, it is surely instrumental in forming and transforming bonding social capital. By joining EBRG the young people from Vidigal joined into a fellowship, a network that they had hitherto not had access to. Prior to EBRG, there were only limited possibilities for ‘joining in’ – the most notorious being

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<sup>53</sup> I am grateful to Adjunct Professor Maria Paula Araujo, Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro, for directing my attention to the distinction made in a Brazilian context between integration and inclusion; the latter being the appropriate term to apply when investigating issues in relation to the predicament of *favela* communities.

<sup>54</sup> Team member, EBRG.

joining a gang. Simply by providing an alternative, by providing access, opportunity and recognition, EBRG and LPP make a positive contribution to the community in which they operate.

*Q: What is the best thing about this community?*

*A: It is the unity – because generally out there, if you live in an apartment you're not going to have the communication. You can die and no one does anything. Here, if you are not feeling well, if you have a headache, your neighbour will knock on your door and bring you to the hospital. The solidarity in the community is very great. The unity is what makes [the community] strong.*

*Aluna, 16, years, LPP*

However, whether this unity, this bonding social capital, is fungible or not is another matter. Evoking the notion of productive social capital it is argued that the two projects, in particular LPP, do not only create social capital but transform it as well in a manner that is beneficial to the communities.

*We think that working together with the family is extremely important. We are not just dealing with the aluno. The aluno is followed by a family, by problems and other things, and the parents want to know how to help too.*

*Team member, LPP*

Statements referring to the *academia* as a family were common in the course of my fieldwork and indicate that some form of social capital is generated at the two projects (Coalter 2009: 60). Everyone involved, either as *aluno*, coach or project worker, strongly identified with the *academias* and considered themselves part of the 'family', as part of a specific social field with appertaining support to grow.

*It is sort of like a family. Everyone takes care of everyone.*

*Aluno, 11 years, EBRG*

*It is better here [in the community] now that I do boxing. I stay here in the building all the time. I'm already here but my class only begins later. I don't have anything to do at home or in the street so I come here. I almost live here... It is like a second home.*

*Aluno, 14 years, LPP*

The homeliness of the *academias* was affirmed by the setting that invited people to hang out even when not training as well as by the history, such as news pieces involving the projects and its participants, displayed on the walls. When staying at either place I got a strong sense of an inclusionary space where everyone in fact did mind everyone and, just as a home, provided a sense of belonging as well as identity.

Such constructive identification through sports participation draws out the notion of *bonding* social capital (Rosentraub & Ijla 2008: 342). The fact that “everyone takes care of everyone”, continuously observable at both projects, alludes to the inherent reciprocity, the mutual trust, values and norms, which are derived from building bonding social capital. However, this type of social capital may not be fungible as to becoming someone outside of the specific social field.

Bridging social capital is taken to strengthen links and understanding between *various* groups and is often taken to require participants from outside the community to get involved; in that we “connect with people unlike ourselves” (Putnam 2000: 411). LPP does work towards a bridging goal by presenting themselves as a project in Maré, i.e. for all 16 *favelas*, but as previously established simply crossing the lines between two *favelas* in the same neighbourhood can be a daunting task.

*A: Do you have alunos from all of Maré?*

*A: In reality we only have a few alunos who are not from communities under the same facção. Very few alunos. Because it is very difficult to cross for young people. More children may [cross] but for the young people it is much more difficult.*

*Q: Why is it difficult for the young people to get here?*

*A: Because it is difficult to pass the established boundaries... Young people sometimes feel threatened if they want to go to another place and they are questioned, ‘Why did you go there? What did you do there?’ It is difficult for the young people... And now with this war, nobody knows what’s going to happen*

Juliana Tibau, Project Manager, LPP

Nonetheless, LPP as well as EBRG are open to participants from “outside” and seem to encourage more to participate.

*There are some who live far away. Most of the young people are from the communities close to here but a good part is also from outside because the project is much publicised.*

*There are for example some young people here who know people outside and talk to them about the project... They invite people from the outside to come here.*

*Aluno, 16 years, LPP*

In a sense, LPP and EBRG are building bridging social capital by inviting each other to local competitions: if the *alunos* from EBRG did not go to compete at LPP, they would most likely never

go to Maré.<sup>55</sup> Interestingly, the competitive fighters, who double as *profesores* that I interviewed at EBRG, demonstrated some insight into the reality facing the *moradores* in Maré as well as knowledge of the workings of LPP. One commented how he felt privileged living in Vidigal after visiting Maré, which indicates a consolidation of the bonding and sense of belonging that unfold at the *academia*. A point reinforced by the informants at LPP who would voice similar content with their community and affirm similar identification with their community. While this, on one hand, is an example of how people prefer what they know instead of striving for what they do not know, on the other hand it is an affirmation of an active positioning.

When conceiving of social capital as a resource it points to its quality as something that can be created, applied and invested. In continuation of the ‘sacrifice’ of being a role model, understood as how the role exert some form of control on one’s behaviour, it should also be conceived of as an investment and as resulting from specific navigation; by becoming a role model you become a nodal point in the social structure and as such occupy an advantageous position. The position as role model is one that may impact, through the projection of values and norms, in a very direct manner on the positions of the other persons in the same social structure, as argued in the previous chapter. In addition to making way for impacting on social identities, it points to the potential that lies within a specific social field for navigating in order to not just create goods but also act upon already present goods and impact on the very field. The two projects demonstrate how social capital is not just created and applied within a social field, but also *transformed*. This is an important insight when examining the aspect of trust: I argue that when trust is consolidated through bonding social capital it may or may not impede on the building of bridging social capital. The crux is that without consolidating trust in any form, bridging is simply impossible.

The aspect of reciprocity comes out in the productive social capital as it becomes clear that by being connected you acquire obligation while also being under obligation. When adhering to the rules of the *academia*, *alunos* as well as team members gain access to the resources at the *academia*. By being community-based, a sports-based project may then, via their sociability networks, contribute to the strengthening of social bonds. In fact, they constitute a real and varied source of social capital and may, at best, serve as “a springboard to active participation” in the community (Harvey 2003:28). Although, I did not talk to anyone who had taken up community service outside of the *academias*, my overall impression was that especially the more engaged participants, such as senior *alunos* and team members, gave a lot of thought as to how the projects can benefit the communities – and how their social roles expand beyond the project walls.

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<sup>55</sup> There is no formalised cooperation between LPP and EBRG but the two know each other well and in the words of team members from both *academias* talk to each other and get together over competitions.

*What I learn I attempt to pass on. My brothers I tell, 'Stop repeating classes in school – it's no good for your future. Stop staying in the streets'. I try to pass on to a lot of people that I meet.*

*Aluna and youth leader, 16 years, LPP*

In addition, both projects strive to augment their social capital within the larger social field that is the community which they call home. LPP involves a large network of actors, social organisations as well as researchers, inside and outside of Maré, and while EBRG does not have access to such social capital they did hold the before-mentioned meeting for the parents of the *alunos* to which they invited representatives from the local health centre in addition to a NGO from Rocinha – a concrete attempt of building bridges.

The *academia* itself can be interpreted as social capital proper in that it produces resources as a collective and distributes the resources among its members. With this, social capital takes on a collective form although it is the individual actor who benefits from the resources who is the centre of attention (Siisiainen 2000: 12). LPP demonstrates this in practice while also opening up its capital to the extended network of the *alunos*. The capital is primarily taken to be social, but there is also a significant measure of human capital available as computer classes and educational reinforcement is on offer. Further, LPP organises trips outside of the community, for many *alunos* this is the first time they visit the 'formal' city.

*It is cool because you can grow here. Inside the project you'll know that there's a bigger world out there... We went to visit the planetarium in Gávea, we went to other places in the city. A lot of people who live here don't know it.*

*Aluna, 16 years, LPP*

Such trips entail a building of *inter alia* human and cultural capital as the participants gain knowledge of the bigger city and its possibilities.

Being a sports-only project, EBRG does not offer such resources; however it provides an excellent framework for developing other forms of capital if, and that may be a big if, the project is expanded in terms of activities besides boxing.

*It would be nice to have other activities apart from boxing... I would like to have lectures about boxing, how to protect yourself, about bem-estar (wellbeing)...*

*Aluno, 15 years, EBRG*

Wellbeing is a central notion as it refers to the quality of the relationships that an individual has to others: “the more social connections young people have to draw upon, the greater their sense of

wellbeing (Deuchar 2009: 98). Wellbeing is, thus, related to having a sense of power to decide and act and is thus a matter of social capital as well as social navigation.

*Q: What is the best thing about LPP?*

*A: Here you can grow. And you don't have to pay. You have opportunities that you wouldn't have otherwise...*

*Q: What do you mean by "growing"?*

*A: You learn something. You become better. You change...*

*Aluno, 16 years, LPP*

The most important work undertaken at both projects is the effort to reinforce a positive outlook and impart self-confidence among the *alunos*, and the most important lesson learned by the participants is their confidence in their own worth and abilities – they understand that they themselves may carve out their identity and path.

*Here they see how boxing can make a life for you. They don't need to become lutadores, they can become professores and work in gyms all over the world... And if they are interested in something else, they will understand the importance of school and training to doing what they want to do.*

*Team member, EBRG*

LPP states their objective to be a 'knock-out to social exclusion'; that knock-out may be perceived elementary as to be included, as in being allowed access to a social structure in which you are not only positioned but may position yourself and make yourself count. Basically, when you are included, you count. By being a field in which the social capital may be constructed and transformed, the *academia* provides room for navigation and social inclusion.

## 7.2 Climbing through the ropes: Count me in

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Participants are attracted to the projects because of the sport on offer and they know about it primarily by word of mouth:

*Q: How did you arrive at LPP?*

*A: I started because of my cousin who did boxing here. He encouraged me. I tried and I liked it.*

*Q: Do you tell other people about the academia?*

*A: Yes. I've told my friends. Some of them are here now...*

*Aluno, 14 years, LPP*

By joining the projects you meet and get to know people and as such you are included in a continuously larger social structure with access to bonding as well as bridging social capital. A fundamental challenge for a young person growing up in a context of marginalisation is how to play a part, how to be recognised and how to make a living for him- or herself. This is the starting point for any social action, or rather navigation. Social navigation is the appropriate term because of the unsettled nature of social becoming in the *favela*. One opportunity for becoming is to join a gang; another is to join another social structure such as the projects investigated here. The gangs offer two important things: social capital and identification – and in order to make a positive impact, the sport-based projects have to offer the same.

*A new boy enters the academia. He seems a bit shy but the professor is readily greeting him and he soon finds his voice. He is 12 years old and his friend has talked to him [about EBRG] and he would like to participate. He says that he is “available” Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. “No problem”, [the professor] says and adds (with a twinkle), “but you ought to come every day after school.”*

Observation notes, EBRG, 21 September 2009

I later asked the *professor*, a 21-year old, why he encouraged *alunos* to come as often as possible:

*Our objective is to occupy the children, their free time, and thus keep them away from the drug trade... As professor you should connect the children... There aren't many leisure possibilities for the kids here in the community. The only option for leisure, I think, is really the beach. And a lot of the children, who come here, come directly from school to here and go directly home afterwards. If they didn't do boxing, what would they be doing?*

Team member, EBRG

By just turning up at the *academias*, the young people are making a choice, just as joining a *facção* is a choice (cf. Dowdney 2003); they are taking a step in a certain direction. This may not be something they think about when signing up – they come because they want to do boxing – nonetheless both projects are explicitly positioning themselves as an alternative to being on the street. Not everyone gets hooked on boxing; some show up once or twice, some stay for a few months and some for years, vowing never to stop. Regardless of this, most of them get something positive out of it – even if that something is to realise the possibility to opt in and out of a social structure such as a sport-based project.

*The moment you enter the ring you are already a winner. There are a lot of people who do not have the courage to enter the ring. If you do not know the other girl, you do not know where she is from, what she does, how she fights. You do not know the other person. You have no way of knowing what the other person is going to do... If you conquer the ring you are going to be better.*

This is so because entering the ring, literally and figuratively speaking, requires courage and confidence. In short, it requires trust – something that is often in short supply of in the specific context and therefore something that it worked on at both projects, explicitly at LPP:

*The alunos form pairs – one has to keep his eyes closed and the other must lead through an obstacles course; first with a grip on the arm, then with the voice. The atmosphere is very good, the alunos are clearly having fun – at times they get pretty noisy but they stay focused for the most part. After the exercise, all the alunos sit down and talk about what the exercise was about. They talk about how it felt to be at another person's "mercy" - how the ones who got through the course the fastest and without hitting the obstacles were the ones who listened to and trusted their partner.*

Observation notes, LPP, 26 October 2010

This practical exercise got the *alunos* thinking over a very important thing: How can you benefit from trusting?

*Being a part of the project gives you a lot of responsibility and you grow with that. You are shown trust and you trust in return.*

Aluna, 16 years, LPP

When a display of trust is reciprocated you are truly recognised, which means that you, if you know the rules of the game, are no longer simply a pawn with a position but a player who may position himself. Boxing is a fitting sport in the sense, as it is a struggle, a combat without victims, by which the young person makes his own choices and may take chances based on what he has learned.

*Q: What the most important thing for you when you enter the ring?*

*A: To stay calm and to know how to play – to know how to use the rules, you know. You have to keep your head, you have to stay calm, and you have to apply what you've learned during training.*

Aluno, EBRG

The *alunos* do not simply acquire sporting skills, such as how to win, but life skills, such as how to win, how to lose and how to proceed to obtain the best possible outcome in the ring as well as outside. These essential skills are required in a process of continuous improvement and accomplishment, of evolving and becoming, in which the participants build their self-esteem and self-efficacy at the same time as they build relationships to others.

*I don't fight because I want to win. I fight to see how far I've gotten with my practice. If the fight is over and I've won then great. But I don't fight to win. When I fight I stay in my head. And when I leave the ring I still have my friends.*

Aluno, 14 years, LPP

Boxing's applicability for social good is inherent in this notion of being a part of something bigger: You may enter the ring alone but you always have someone in your corner. As continuously made clear by Wacquant (2004) as well as by my informants, a boxer is not formed in solitude and even when you climb through the ropes, you are not alone.

When you come out of the corner, you engage and establish a sense of connectedness with your opponent, which in turn furthers a process of self-discovery and self-recognition. Most *alunos* interviewed at both EBRG and LPP expressed their desire for entering competitions, though not for the glory as much as because of the symbolism of the ring: In the ring, everyone is equal and enters on equal terms. In the ring you are initiated and may gauge your progress – gauge what you have accomplished and your very position in life. As social identity exactly unfolds in the meeting and interaction, the act of entering the ring may be seen as a metaphor for the position and positioning of an agent.

By participating, by practising, sparring and navigating, the individual *aluno* may find his, or her, place and may strive to become someone else; the *aluno* may get a sense of who he or she is and wants to be.

*You train and train and train... When you enter the ring it is a very cool thing. You get to know how far you have come... Today I am a professor, I am a competitor. All this is because of this project.*

Team member, EBRG

Practice makes if not perfect, then different – through practice you grow and develop. A climate of mastery or competition helps “the process of developing sporting skills” which in turns helps the process of developing life skills, notably perceived as self-efficacy and self-confidence (Coalter 2009: 68). All of this contributes to an overall sense of competence which surely will impact on the social navigation of the individual.

*I started as aluna, thereafter youth counsellor, then as volunteer and now I'm part of the team. It's a great advancement and success. An exercise in responsibility...*

Team member, LPP

In the process of accumulating and transforming one's social capital, the individual participant negotiates his or her identity as belonging to the project. This happens because the participants identify with the project and with its "practice, principles and products" (Castro et al. 2002: 474). Through social navigation, young people may then not only position themselves, meaning identifying themselves with the projects, but also optimise their social, and other, capital.

*I like that people know me now. I never had that before. I train and I fight here and people know me. They notice me. I even know more people in school... It is easier for me to talk to people.*

*Aluno, 14 years, LPP*

*Boxing changed a lot of things in my life... Here in Vidigal people know me.*

*Member of team, EBRG*

The importance of visibility, and its companion self-responsibility, must be emphasised, especially in a setting of social exclusion or marginalisation, as they are inextricably linked to a sense of community and, therefore, to identity (Jarvie 2006: 331f.). Further, trust and social rules are social phenomena that may be influenced by the building and transaction of social capital (Seippel 2006: 171). The cases are highly instrumental to that end as they stress social rules regarding, *inter alia*, communication and cooperation, which are fundamental requirements for constructive navigation of social fields. By constructive navigation I refer to navigating in a way that utilises the social capital made at the *academia* and beyond in order to achieve a wanted outcome, in order to become.

### 7.3 Becoming through participation

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"A boxer in the ring is a being who screams, with all his heart, with all his body: "I want to be someone. I exist."" (Wacquant 2004: 240)

The notion of social identity comprises an optic to investigate how social capital and social navigation is related. Social identity is, as previously established, a process in which the actor continuously finds himself positioned by others and positioning himself. This position/positioning does not happen in a vacuum, but takes place in a social structure so that even the positioning undertaken by the actor himself is subjected to and influencing on the positioning of other actors. The multitude of positions and 'positionings' taking place in a social field adds to the social capital involved in that field. This process of social identity has a purpose. An actor is not positioned/positioning without cause, but embarks on the never-ending journey in order to optimise his resources. With this, the link to social navigation is reinforced as the tension between

latitude and opportunity appears as an in-between position in which one has to move in order to form and transform social capital.

The marginalised position of many *favela* dwellers seems like a social moratorium; to be marginal is to be maintained, or rather restrained, in an involuntary position with limited opportunities for becoming. The marginal being is also indicative of the moving of the terrain, e.g. the incalculable police incursions as well as the unplanned closings of schools during shoot-outs definitely cause the terrain to shift. The notion of social navigation shed light on how the actor may still optimise his resources.

Social capital is coupled to social navigation as the latter in part may be said to refer to the “drawing upon social connections as a means of increasing a sense of wellbeing in individuals. In so doing, young people may be able to maximise their levels of self-esteem, self-efficacy, emotional stability and confidence.” (Deuchar 2009: 98).

*It is such an important thing. Self-esteem for young people. Who has it can conquer so much more. That is how it is for me. My life was always like that. Nothing came easy. Everything was a struggle... But I will go conquering. I have my focus and I will get to where I want to be. It is very cool how you can grow here. Everybody who comes here will grow. I got an opportunity and discovered more opportunities.*

Aluno, LPP

The *alunos* clearly allude to the becoming that takes place when getting involved at the projects. They take on a new social identity as *alunos de boxe*. They wear their uniform with pride and the surroundings allocate them respect and recognition because of the identity signalled by the uniform.

*“...any menino who comes down here, who comes down the morro, who goes into Leblon and nears a car, the person in the car will rapidly close the window fearing to be robbed – because it’s a boy from the favela. But the ones who come down in uniform, it’s cool... Then the person will not close the window fearing to be robbed but will actually be respectful.*

Team member, EBRG

The identification with the projects influences on how others perceive or identify one, and as such is exemplary of how you may actively impact on, maybe even erode, the stigma allocated to you. By positioning yourself as a member of the *academia* you may protect yourself not just from stigma but from being positioned as e.g. a threat, either by people in the *asfalto* or by the *facções* – the latter exemplified by a team member at LPP who offered me one a project t-shirt so everyone could easily see the reason for my presence in the community. In addition, many of my informants talked

about ‘growing’ – how their participation at the projects had helped them grow, which is a fundamental acknowledgement of their increased self-esteem and how they perceive their room for manoeuvring. A young woman who had started out as a pregnant teenager had, in her own words, “grown” so much due to LPP that she was now a youth worker in the project and in charge of the citizenship classes and other activities:

*We take the young people outside of the community because many activities only take place outside of the favela. Some never visited a museum, never went to the theatre. It is a very closed world here... When we stay in here, we forget our rights... I think the most important thing is to show [the young people] that the world is not here in the community. That the world is bigger, that they can go far. This is most important I think. To go and discover that the world is much bigger... They have to look for and run after their dreams.*

Team member, LPP

In addition, to rendering self-discovery possible and allowing *alunos* to dare to dream, which in itself is an accomplishment, the effect on processes of inclusion is most positive. The participants feel like they are part of something that provides them with not just identity but with capacity for action. The operability of social navigation is the social becoming that is at the centre of the notion – by becoming you realise and position yourself.

*Inside the project you’ll know that there’s a bigger world out there and you want to experience it.*

*Aluno, LPP*

By realising that the world is bigger, the *alunos* may find themselves in unfamiliar, if not unstable, terrain.

*To be a youth leader is to be a reference point for the young people... I talk to the young people, explain the exercises... I advise them, I connect them to the team, I let the team know who needs help or support, how to do everything possible to help that person.*

*Aluna and youth leader, 16 years, LPP*

But they are not required to navigate by dead reckoning as they are surrounded by points of orientation. To be a reference point, which I argue that every role model, mentor and otherwise engaged individual at LPP and EBRG is, means to not only to provide an example but to provide navigation marks by assisting the “movement through the socially *immediate* and the socially *imagined*” (Vigh 2009: 425, author’s emphasis); i.e. assisting the young people’s positioning in the here and now as well as positioning in relation to future goals.

*One of my dreams is to see one of my alumnos enter the ring and become a fighter, become a winner. But just to enter the ring is a victory. I would like to see one of my alumnos climb into the ring. Or, if my alumnos use the training, if my alumnos get an education and help to improve the life of their family, then I would be satisfied.*

Team member, EBRG

The bonding social capital available at the *academias* then may very well result in increased bridging as the participant go discovering for themselves. Because social identity is a “public projection of a self, not necessarily a true version of self, but some version of self”, it is a part of the identity process to join or leave school, a gang, a sports centre (Barker 2005: 21). Signing up at the *academia* is basically an act of identification because identity “is not something that one can *have*; it is something that one *does*” (Jenkins 2008: 5, author’s emphasis). What I am suggesting is that the value of EBRG and LPP for the individual lies in the fact that entering the ring, or at least the *academia*, is a highly public display of one's worth, which certainly is the case, but even more in the fact that the two *academias* represent arenas for *doing* identity and for social becoming.

*Q: Do you think that boxing made a difference in your life?*

*A: Definitely! I grew with boxing and it changed my behaviour. I didn't brawl a lot but I brawled occasionally. Since I entered here I haven't brawled at all. I think boxing calms you and gives you a focus.*

*Q: So what is your focus?*

*A: I tried to get a bolsa to go to college but I didn't succeed. It's very difficult to get a bolsa. But now I am supposed to do the course to be a [certified] coach and to take over my own classes.*

*Q: So, what is your plan for yourself?*

*A: To be a better fighter and a better coach.*

*Q: And if you didn't have boxing?*

*A: I have no idea! I would probably try to find a different job... But I really have no idea what I would like to do. I love to do this. I love to be a boxer, and to be a coach. And it gives me some respect in the community.*

Team member, EBRG

Putnam (2000) writes about the decline in associational life as one of the factors indicative of the perceived decline in social capital in American (United States) society; when people opt out of voluntary organisations and bowl alone, their social capital will lag. In the *favela* and in many other communities it is, however, not solely a matter of opting in or out – it is a matter of having access to the path of associational life. What EBRG and LPP offer is access; not just to an association, but to an association that resonates with the target group. The only other alternatives that exist in civil society, i.e. between family, school and the state, may roughly be determined as

the *facções* and the church.<sup>56</sup> By signing up at the *academia*, young people are navigating the terrain of the *favela* and choosing the path they want to tread.

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<sup>56</sup> There are numerous churches and religious communities active in Brazilian society, including Catholic, Evangelical, Pentecostal and various Afro-Brazilian congregations. It is beyond the purpose, time and space at hand to examine the role of these in relation to building social capital among young people in the *favela*.

## 8 Embarking on new paths

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*The academia is a path. It is an alternative.*

Team member, EBRG

Stereotypes abound when it comes to the two central issues of boxing and the *favela* but spending time getting familiar with both, especially in conjunction with each other, provides for insight into and critical reflection on both. The positive qualities of both are often overlooked but are very real and productive. When investigating the notion of social capital the bonding aspect stands out. The participants are mostly homogeneous in terms of background and life situation. However, the opportunity for being a part, for being counted in, should not be disregarded as a resource for navigating new waters and, at least, attempting, to break marginalisation.

Colloquially, in the ring, if you roll with the punches, you meet adversity head on and adapt to the challenges; such adapting may appear as a gamble but in reality you stand a better chance of gaining the upper hand. The metaphor borrows weight from the field and stresses the interplay between the practical and the analytical (Baarts 2003: 44). The notion, thus, alludes to how social problems such as marginalisation can be addressed and how an agent may roll with the punches outside the ring as well. One way of doing it is to by social navigation and a transformation of social capital from a perverse to a productive social capital.

### 8.1 On violence – in the ring and outside

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*Before the violence was worse, then the violence diminished. But my mother gets scared sometimes when I go outside... There's the rivalling favela and once they came in here. There was shooting and many people died... Here even the small kids know about that type of violence. There are people who think that it's tranquil here but today there might be shots, tomorrow there might be shots again, and more shots again. There will be shooting until the war is over. It takes time... There's the caveirão (armoured vehicle),<sup>57</sup> it always comes here. People hide in the houses... Once when I was here for boxing class there was shooting out there and the people here wouldn't let us leave... They keep you here and call the homes and tell the mothers that their children are here... I think it was last Wednesday [21 October 2009] there was a shooting... They insisted that we stayed here until it was over...*

Aluno, 14 years, LPP

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<sup>57</sup> The *caveirão*, literally 'big skull', is a military-style armoured vehicle, which the BOPE (*Batalhão de Operações Policiais Especiais* or Special Police Operations Battalion) uses when making incursions into the *favelas*. The vehicle is painted all black with the BOPE logo on its sides; the logo depicts a knife in a skull, hence the nickname.

To the outsider, the *favela* seems like a very dangerous place as corroborated by a passer-by who, when asked for directions (many *favelas* are filled with intricate and winding streets and there is an overwhelming lack of street signs), incredulously exclaimed: “you want to go up *there*?” To the *moradores*, the *favela* in which they live is their community and it is not any different than other communities because “you have problems here [in Maré] like you have problems in every place”.<sup>58</sup> This sentiment was common among almost every person I talked to; although *Cariocas* are well aware that they live in an extremely violence-ridden city, they would still maintain that any city in the world is a dangerous place. The fact is that when “societal turbulence and its social manifestations become everyday”, then violence may be conceived as an evitable fact of life (Vigh 2009: 421).

*I saw a morador die when the police entered. Not a drug dealer but a morador. An innocent who was without guilt in what happened... The corrupt police enter and apprehend a young person who did not do anything and press him for money... It is very wrong. They are the law... The police never help. And when they help is very rare... And life goes on. We see how in the middle of the conflict, in the middle of everything, life has many risks... There was the helicopter that crashed [a week ago] and three policemen who died. They died with honesty... In every corner of the world there's violence. It's not just in the favela. In every part of the world there's violence. And life goes on.*

Aluna and youth leader, 16 years, LPP<sup>59</sup>

Such routinisation, or ‘everydaying’ of violence, is a “first step in the process of establishing conflict and instability as social terrain” and thereby anticipate the movement of that terrain (Vigh 2006: 153). In this it may also be a first step in the process of breaking from the social moratorium that marginalisation and exclusion signify.

*We work a lot with violence because for many young people violence is only physical. We talk about that violence is also institutional, when the power, the government, violate one's rights. And violence can also be psychological.*

Team member, LPP

The work undertaken at LPP in this way touches upon an essential notion of citizenship, which unfortunately is more or less absent at EBRG: The notion of rights. To know about and, more importantly, reflect upon one's rights is an important stepping-stone in one's social inclusion. However, it is also a delicate matter as learning about one's rights and how one's rights are being

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<sup>58</sup> Team member, LPP.

<sup>59</sup> During my fieldwork there was yet another attempt by a *commando* to take over control of a *favela* from another *commando*. During the ensuing violence, a police helicopter was shot down by unspecified *traficantes* as it overflew the contested community at low altitude.

violated, how one's social identity is being discounted, can be detrimental in terms of self-esteem. A marginalised individual may be perceived of as less of a human, as a carrier of stigma, and thus subjected to "varieties of discrimination, through which we effectively, if often unthinkingly, reduce his life chances." (Goffman (1993: 77). However that may be, rights are resources, i.e. a form of capital, and are thus essential to identity work. To know and reflect on one's rights, in addition to one's duties, is yet another form of navigation point as an agent is made conscious of not only other's expectations of one's position but also possibilities for re-positioning.

LPP and EBRG function as refuges, though not as escapes from social realities as described by Waquant (2006: 238). They are refuges in which the social realities may be reflected upon and challenged and productive social capital may be constructed – and perverse social capital may be transformed. While they may not have encountered direct violence, all of the informants are intimate with the violence that exists in their community and they still live in a *favela* with the marginalisation that it carries. As one *morador* puts it:

*...the greatest form of violence here isn't armed violence. The greatest violence is the lack of opportunities.*

*Morador (in Fight for Peace 2006)*

Newspaper headlines aside, the fact is that the majority of young people in the *favela* avoid violence with everything they have (Barker 2005: 39); however, the direct violence have harrowing ways of catching up with you and the structural violence is seemingly unavoidable. The latter is due to a lack of opportunities, the marginality of the *favela*, and is as such related to a lack of positive capital – social and otherwise. As accounted for, LPP and EBRG somewhat counter such lacking, or lagging, by providing opportunities that would otherwise not exist. By so doing, the projects contribute to a diminishing of structural violence but they also contribute to a diminishing of direct violence.

Some people may perceive boxing to be about violence, but to the initiated it is not so. There is no evidence to suggest that boxing, or any other sport, may lead to increased violence more than any other social activity. In fact, it may be considered an antidote to violence if you go by the many testimonies of young people and their coaches who talk about getting into scuffles in school, in the street, at home *prior* to entering boxing classes.

*We have an aluno... He does boxing. He is a 14-year old boy and he had various problems. He was very aggressive; he liked to fight a lot in the streets. And his mother restricted him from coming here. He was so quarrelsome. She thought that if he did sport, if he learned to box, then he would become even more aggressive. This was how she thought. She did not want him to do any form of sport. But she let him come here and he changed so much. He has become much more peaceful and he respects his mother more... The mother came here*

*and said, 'Look, I have to thank you because my child has changed. My child was very aggressive, he had many problems, and he never respected me. But I have to thank you because my child is different now. He is a wonderful child.' And today he comes here even when we do not have activities – he will stay here the entire day. And he has a brother who is 11 years and who is much like him... Both are here now. And the mother is very proud.*

Team member, LPP

I can only concur that boxing is an excellent sport that allows for blowing off steam and diminishing aggressive behaviour, in addition to functioning as a catharsis.<sup>60</sup> This is a point corroborated by all the *alunos* among my informants who expressly stated that they found themselves calmer and much less prone to aggressiveness after taking up boxing. As a self-professed former troublemaker put it:

*Boxing is a violent sport but only inside the academia. When you start doing boxing, when you learn to practise, you become calmer. You become conscious about what you're capable of doing.*

Aluno, EBRG

And in the words of the aforementioned 14-year old *aluno*:

*Before I wrangled a lot. And now some people think that because I started boxing [then] they should be afraid of me. But I didn't start boxing so others would be scared of me in the street. I came here to do sport, to compete. I didn't enter here to briga (wrangle) in the street... Before I started here I'd always be in the street and make trouble. Now I spend my time here and at home. I am much more relaxed now... My life changed a lot. I used to do many wrong things. I fought a lot at home. And now I don't. I don't have a lot of problems, not even in school. Previously the school would complain a lot about me. And that changed.*

Aluno, 14 years, LPP

This may support the claim that boxing is not only highly civilised – *the noble art* – as excessive and conspicuous use of force is not sanctioned but that it is excellent for building the “character of man”<sup>61</sup> as well as effectively preventing violent behaviour of the participants, as corroborated by my informants.

Another *aluno* of the same age confirmed:

*I have learned how to behave, I don't get into trouble in the streets anymore, I'm respectful to older persons... My mother didn't think that I would change but I came here and I stopped behaving like before. My mother did not believe it at first. But now she sees that I am much calmer.*

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<sup>60</sup> <http://www.projetoboxevidigal.xpg.com.br/3.html>

<sup>61</sup> Team member, EBRG.

Combat sports are particularly valuable as “they offer the adrenaline, which the involvement in armed violence offers” (Figueiredo 2006: 11). However, while both may offer a sense of being a member of a group, combat sports are accompanied by discipline, rules, and a notion of responsibility towards one self and others and as such induce a feeling of being a part of a positive collective; i.e. a network brimming with productive social capital. This may be opposed to the perverse social capital of the *facções* where you need not even be a member of a specific *facção* in order to be positioned by it: The social stigma accompanies many young people when travelling outside of their community as they are perceived to be associated “with drug factions even if they are not themselves involved in drug trafficking” (cf. Dowdney 2003; Deucher 2009). So even when disregarding the *facção* as a path, the young people have to navigate the terrain around it.

The verb, *lutar*, may be translated into both ‘to fight’ and ‘to struggle’; the latter alluding to the attempt of achieving something. As demonstrated by Wright (2006) and substantiated by both projects, fighting as a metaphor and as a concept resonates with most of the participants. An important point to make is that violence “is formative; it shapes people’s perceptions of who they are and what they are fighting for” (Nordstrom & Robben 1995: 4). In the end violence is as much a creative and transformative as a destructive force, which is most obviously exemplified by the name of *Luta Pela Paz*, literally, fight for peace.

*We want to expand the project. We want to have more education, we want to involve more people, we want to give more opportunities...There is always a luta.*

Aluno, LPP

The time spent at the *academia* may very well be time spent away from violence. I definitely see a concord between my findings and Wright's assertion that the participants may “take the familiar experience of fighting they already identify with and sanction it, control it, structure it, refine it, harness it, [take] ownership of it and turn it into an art form to be valued and respected” (2006: 150). By taking to fighting, the participants base their identity on a self-reliance that dictates that they can have the initiative and the power to make decisions that will enhance their life situation and prospects.

*When I started boxing, everything changed. I didn't want to argue or scuffle; I wanted to get something else. When I used to wrangle it was about fleeing. I was fleeing and fleeing and fleeing in my head... But I got another goal. I want to become a champion. I want to win... I built strength here. If I didn't have my strength I wouldn't have gotten anywhere. I keep saying, 'I'll get there, I'll make an effort.' Otherwise I would never have gotten here – to be part of a team... Nothing in my life came easy. Everything was a struggle... But I go conquering. I have my focus and I will get to where I want to be.”*

Aluna & youth leader, 16 years, LPP

This demonstrates the creative potential of violence – of struggling to navigate direct and, in particular, structural violence. Structural violence may cripple an individual or groups of individuals from social becoming but by harnessing the skills acquired in one social field, e.g. the ring, the participants at the projects find another way to make themselves count. One way of doing this is by converting the rules of boxing into social rules in order to consolidate one’s identification with the project and apply it outside of the *academia*. The social capital contained at the *academias* is thus fungible in terms of navigating marginality as demonstrated by the *alunos* who acquire social skills, including trust, because of the projects and thereby navigate their own lives.

## 8.2 Step up: What about the girls?

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*For girls... there is football in Leblon for girls. But there is not a lot of sport for girls in the community. There is capoeira and jiu jitsu too... A lot of girls come here to ask, ‘Couldn’t you talk to Raff about boxing for girls?’, and I say that it isn’t my decision... At the moment Raff doesn’t want [boxing for girls] because he already had it and the girls didn’t take it seriously.*

Team member, EBRG

There is one overwhelming critique to be made of EBRG: Girls are excluded from participation. This is, in my view, the biggest difference between LPP and EBRG, rather than the holistic approach to implementation at LPP. My impression is that the decision by the director of EBRG to count the girls out was made in order to better offer a tactical room for the adolescent and young men – the argument being that the girls provided a distraction. But this disposition runs counter to the objectives of the project and disregards the fact that girls and young women also may find themselves in a predicament.

*My life was always difficult for me because my mum is in prison and I take care of my 6 siblings... I cook and I take care of everything. We live with my grandmother..... I decided to do boxing because I envisioned the training: ‘I want to do boxing, I want to get mad, and no one will get in my way.’ That was my intention... My life was full of problems. And when I came to train it was ok to express my anger. Before I wouldn’t talk about it to anyone. I wouldn’t talk about it to anyone because I thought that most people were enemies. My life was very difficult. Very, very difficult. And this changed so many things. For sure!*

Aluna & youth leader, 16 years, LPP

This account, made by a young woman, serves as a powerful reminder of the importance of providing access for girls as well as for boys. If one is excluded it goes beyond sport participation and social capital. At any rate, the “commonality of experience” between individuals who otherwise

have a lot in common in terms of life situation is thwarted, thereby reinforcing gender distinctions, including stereotyping, and inhibiting communication (Lever 1983: 153). And in the most pessimist interpretation it may build a sort of perverse social capital as the outcome is limited to a segment of the community.

Girls and women are affected by exclusion and marginalisation just as their male counterparts. While stereotyping with regards to *favela* dwellers seems to target the, especially younger, male population, the fact is that gender stereotypes hamper the navigational efforts of girls and young women. One powerful means to include girls and women and alter stereotypes by upending what seem “normal” is to allow them to play alongside boys and men (Read & Bingham 2009: xvi; Saavedra 2009: 127). By such altering of social norms the aggregate of social capital would surely not only be increased but would be transformed in a positive way.

*I think that it would be a good idea to have boxing for girls also because... some doesn't want but there are some who would like it. You shouldn't generalize. Some of them want [to do boxing]. I think that it would be cool for this project.*

*Aluno, EBRG*

Even though EBRG is restricted to male *alunos*, I traced a general openness among the coaches and the participants towards providing access to the girls; none seemed to agree with the director in that the girls might present a source of distraction or disturbance – even though the director clearly stated that this had been the case. Some even expressed regret that the girls could not learn about boxing as “they would surely also benefit from it”.<sup>62</sup>

Sports-based projects function as templates for social interaction by setting down ground rules, e.g. respect for others; however, any project must take the given context into consideration and the context may result in special consideration with regards to the sexes. The male coach at LPP put it as follows:

*There is no difference whether you work with boys or girls. But you have to understand the girls... In this community it is different because the girls can know someone in a gang. If you say the wrong thing she might tell her husband who is part of a gang...*

Nevertheless, he continues:

*The boys and girls train together. It functions well. There is no difference – they make no difference. Out there it would make a difference but not in here. Everyone is equal... The level is the same when training... Men and women train together but no one messes with another... Total respect.*

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<sup>62</sup> Team member, EBRG.

Team member, LPP

The female informants, who stressed that the participation in LPP represented a major opportunity, confirmed this “total respect”.

*In the beginning, there was only boxing for men. But the girls came to the academia and said that they wanted to do it as well and Luke opened a class for the girls. I would not be doing boxing if Luta Pela Paz was not here... I am the only girl in the class for competidores but it makes no difference. I spar with the guys and they are used to it. In the beginning, they may have been more careful of me but now we spar on equal terms.*

Aluna, 16 years, LPP

This was said by someone who definitely breaks with stereotype: One of only a few *competidoras* (female competitor) in the history of LPP; and the only girl currently in the class reserved for competitive fighters for what reason she primarily spars with male boxers.

Conversely, a rather new *aluno*, a “pure talent” in the words of the coach, told me how he only sparred with girls and yet were ready to debut as a *competidor*:

*I spar with girls because the guys are too big for me. I don't think about that they are girls – what matters is the size... When training, it makes no difference.*

Aluno, 14 years, LPP

In some sense, the experience of LPP breaks with the sentiment that “the ideology of boxing is always masculine, even when adopted by women” (Boddy 2008: 391). What LPP proves is that the ideology of boxing may serve an inclusionary objective that reaches beyond preconceptions and demonstrates the potential of sport to transform social capital, thereby furthering social inclusion. The point is that in order to truly fulfil the potential for social good and further social inclusion the necessary premise is that everybody has a right to participate in sport on equal terms. The fact is that women are just as eager to enter the ring as men – and have just as much at stake.

*I would like to give the opportunity to girls also... So many men have the right, why can't girls enter? I always tell [the director], ‘Give the opportunity to the girls’. At some point they'll have the opportunity... It's not just men who get on the wrong caminho (path), women do too.*

Team member, EBRG

### 8.3 Navigating marginality: “I’m a fighter, not a thug”

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“It is known that the lower classes have always viewed the sport as a way of climbing positions in life, to overcome barriers to social mobility and the potential to succeed.”<sup>63</sup>

In boxing you may go for broke, i.e. wager everything in an attempt to win. Going for broke is a “last ditch tactic” when everything else fails – it is an all-or-nothing linear course of action (Wacquant 2004: 215n). You may also roll with the punches, i.e. continuously adapt to the changes around you and actively look for opportunities. The metaphor of rolling with the punches can be perceived as a tactical opportunism where you constantly recast your actions in relation to not just your opponent but to the changing context. The way you navigate the ring consequently may inform you about navigating in other terrain as well – what keeps you safe in the ring may keep you safe out of it (Wright 2006: 159).

*My life would be different if I wasn't part of the academia... I give classes two hours a day and train at night and I earn a good salary. What person in Vidigal earns money to do what he likes? This is very valuable for me... My mom is proud and talks about me to everyone. Everything is good that way.*

Team member, EBRG

Joining the *academia* constitutes a means to social becoming. No one exemplifies this better than the *professores* at EBRG:

*In five years time I'll still be fighting – life as an athlete is short so I don't know if I'll still be competing but for sure I'll still be fighting. I'd like to use my education to improve boxing in Rio de Janeiro because here there still isn't a person with an educational background in physical education who is also a boxing instructor. I would like to be the first. I intend to use what I learn at college in boxing.*

Lutador and team member, EBRG

It should be stressed that the team members at both *academias* themselves used to be *alunos*; in fact the *lutadores* are still *alunos* while at the same time serving as *professores*. Most team members transformed their social capital through participation at the *academias* – they have become their own men. They themselves were “mere” *alunos* at one point, and before then they were positioned as “mere” *favela* dwellers, for what reason their path to social becoming serve as powerful navigation marks for their *alunos*.

*Every day I turn into more of an example. I was a boy who came here at ten years old and didn't know how to do anything. Who kept learning, training... In the end, I became a*

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<sup>63</sup> <http://portal.esporte.gov.br/snee/esportesocial/>

*professor. I know the kids look at me, look at Raff, look at all the professores who started out as alunos and see what they can be.*

Team member, EBRG

To allow the participants to change path is also the objective of LPP as it strives to impact on the community in a positive manner:

*What I don't like in the community is the drug trade, because it affects many young people. It is a very negative thing that I see in the community... There is a new project inside the project... It is called Novos Caminhos (New Paths). It is for persons who are involved in tráfico... It provides them with another opportunity... It teaches you to have self-esteem and trust in yourself. Because it's difficult to get away from drugs and from the facções. I never tried it myself but I know because of my mother. My mother was a drug user.*

Aluna and youth worker, 16 years, LPP

The formation and transformation of social, as well as other forms of, capital is fundamentally subjected to power relations (DeFilippis 2001: 783). To have capital is to have a form of power; understood as capacity, and competency, to impact upon, change and control the social field in which one has capital (Tomlinson 2004: 168). This sums up the importance of capital to positioning oneself instead of being positioned by others. In this regard, increasing one's capital is a form of empowerment, a way to take power over one's own self and existence.

Bringing the notions of productive and perverse social capital together with the notions of horizontal and vertical networks allows us to observe how the projects, in particular LPP, are not only sources of social capital but are spaces for transforming social capital and identification:

*"identity for primarily young male adolescents in favelas dominated by drug factions is defined by affiliation to the local faction, even if only through geographical location."*  
(Dowdney 2003: 182)

Every single person in the *favela* is familiar with the reality in which they live because they know their community. They are painstakingly aware of which *facção* is "in charge" of their community – even a child can tell you that *Comando Vermelho* is in charge of Nova Holanda. Adolescents and young people know of the dangers that the *facções* as well as the police represent and they know how to act, how to navigate.

*We who live here don't like the shooting, the police coming in. If you leave your home you need to remember your ID always so [the police] don't think you're a bandido... I don't like all that. I do my boxing and I leave... This place has police, bandits, shootings... You can be playing in the street and then there is firing, shooting... It is really nice how people go out*

*to the bar and the kids are playing in the streets... But sometimes when you play football you have to leave fast because the shooting starts.*

*Aluno, LPP*

I had to leave on one occasion due to the police entering the community, which more often than not results in gunfire, but I was lucky never to experience a shootout. The *aluno* quoted above lives in Nova Holanda who is under the rule of *Comando Vermelho* and according to the media was not supposed to be involved in the infighting over territory that was ongoing at the time of research, although there were frequent shootings between the local *traficantes* and *traficantes* from the *facção* ruling the neighbouring community.<sup>64</sup> Just a few hundred metres from Nova Holanda and LPP the situation was one of de facto war as two other *facções* struggled for dominance and the violence would spill into other communities in Maré, including Nova Holanda. And while I evaded such an experience, my informants told me about several shooting episodes that they had lived through during my fieldwork. In one of those episodes a stray bullet hit a young woman on her way to buy a snack on the very street that LPP is located.

I did not investigate the attitudes among the participants vis-à-vis the *facção* dominating their community. This was a deliberate omission on my part as I had given much thought to wanting to investigate the projects without bias. The fact is that much of what is written by outsiders, such as myself, about life in the *favela* departs from drug-related violence and my errand was not to investigate the *facções* but the *academias* as social fields. I therefore asked open questions related primarily to the projects' significance to the life of the participants and the community in order to allow the young people to express their thoughts in their own words. Nonetheless, most informants would touch upon, directly and indirectly, issues related to the violence, and in those cases I would follow suit.

And the participants are highly aware of the negative alternatives that exist, as one *aluno* said:

*When you're here it is a way of... it is a time where you are not on the street, not getting involved in drugs, not getting involved with bandidos.*

*Aluno, 13 years, EBRG*

The fact is that adolescents and young people are well aware of the *facções* as alternative social fields (Dowdney 2003). However, the mutual respect that used to exist between the *facções* and the *moradores* has in many cases diminished as a consequence of the ongoing territorial wars and resulting instability. It can, thus, be argued that the *facção* as a social field is an increasingly unstable terrain and therefore presents a less attractive path, albeit an open one.

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<sup>64</sup> The uninitiated would have a difficult time distinguishing the lines between the communities.

As argued by Vigh, joining a specific side and getting involved in a de facto war does not indicate meaningless barbarism, much less a criminal predisposition, but is related to a struggle for “social becoming” (2004: 130). Such tactical opportunism can be applied to the context in which many young *favela* dwellers find themselves in order to explain the pull of gangs as well as the attraction of the two sports-based projects. Both help the individual *aluno* to positioning him- or herself as a *lutador* not a *bandido* and this gives them respect and recognition in the form of social and symbolic capital (Figueiredo 2006: 11). A social identity as *bandido* also involves various types of capital; however, the (positive) identity as *lutador* is applicable outside of the *academia* just as the productive social capital may possibly be invested in other social fields – something that the identity as gang member does not provide for. As elaborated on previously, the *lutador* exemplifies how social and symbolic capital may potentially be applied outside of the field in which it was constructed. Returning to the notion of fighting – in the sense of a tactic to optimise one’s situation – we are reminded of the symbolic capital of being a *lutador* instead of a *bandido*. The symbolic capital is not just valid in the eye of the beholder but in the eye of the actor him- or herself and goes by another name: Self-esteem.

A central identity is that of being a citizen as in being a member of society. Citizenship involves both rights, including access to societal goods, and duties, e.g. in the form of paying taxes – both of which many *favela* dwellers are excluded from. I have come across the insinuation that *favela* dwellers take advantage of their marginal status in order to avoid taxation – almost as if they themselves opt to live on the margins of society. However, the majority of *favela* dwellers that I have talked to would like to have a formal job and pay their taxes but then they also want to get their due *services* – a sentiment that may not always resonate with “formal” society who tends to look at the *favelas* as “reservoirs of cheap labour” (Wacquant 2008). There certainly is no doubt that LPP undertakes an important job when allocating time and effort to educate the *alunos* and allow them to reflect on their rights. In addition, by including the young people in the planning and implementation of project activities, LPP provides them with valuable experiences of having control and being empowered, which all adds to a sense of responsibility – an essential part of citizenship (Coalter 2009: 63) – and as such to social becoming.

*We have a youth council because it's the young people who are going to know and have ideas about the project. Any aluno may bring forward ideas or issues for the youth council to discuss. If someone wants to have another sport in the project it's the youth council who will discuss if it's a good idea or not. And the youth council will say no if it doesn't think that the young people will pick up the sport... Who makes the project is not the coaches, the teachers, the people from the administration. Who makes the project are the alunos. We ourselves are Luta Pela Paz...*

*Aluna & youth leader, 16 years, LPP*

LPP substantiates this claim by stating a primary objective as the involvement of, and potential take-over by, the participants; a notable example being a number of project workers who started out as boxing students, proceeded to join the youth council, then volunteered and in the end were hired as members of the team. Such a comprehensive approach to social inclusion captures the quintessence of how to do it; LPP in this sense is highly instructive of how sport for social good ought to be organised.

The same is not the case at EBRG; however the involvement of locally trained coaches has a somewhat similar outcome as the *alunos* observe how the coaches have grown with the opportunity and secured influence, and several *alunos* voiced how they themselves envision becoming someone more through the project. However, the notion of citizenship discloses a deficiency in the implementation at EBRG seeing that the boxing classes, the sport side, have to support the social side of the project. When I conducted my interviews at EBRG, I noticed how the *alunos* had difficulty in understanding the portion of questions related to citizenship. I initially attributed this to a lack of intuition regarding the Portuguese language on my part, but later noticed a difference in the answers provided by *alunos* at EBRG and LPP, respectively. A recent study found that many *alunos* at EBRG lack understanding of the broader dimensions of citizenship beyond a right to vote and have a formal contract of employment (SOLTEC 2009: 38). Through the project's focus on "stay in school – get good grades" the *alunos* gain an understanding of how to become a productive citizen in terms of education and work but they do not reflect on this becoming let alone other tactical choices that they may make.

Nevertheless, both projects contribute to a positive way of coping with social exclusion (cf. Barker 2005). But it goes beyond mere coping and rather aims at subverting social exclusion; it is a matter of navigating in order to become someone:

*I would like to be a professional boxer.... There is Roberto, he's fighting. I think he fought at the Pan American Games. When I came here I heard so much talk about him and there are so many photos of him. Now he lives in São Paulo but he comes here sometimes. And we talk... I would also like to be a coach so that I can give opportunity to others.*

*Aluno, 14 years, LPP*

Investigating the efforts made by the two projects through the optic of social navigation allows us to grasp why strategising can be a valuable but potentially futile effort. For what happens when, and not just if, the terrain moves? Navigating a shifting terrain in order to build and use social capital involves the use of strategy and tactics: If a strategy refers to an overriding objective, then tactic alludes to how the objective may be reached. Therefore, a strategy must be accompanied by tactical manoeuvring in order to fulfil its target. Rolling with the punches is not just a possibility but a necessity for having a shot at fulfilling oneself:

*I came here only to do boxing... After some time I changed and got more involved. [One of the project workers] had a lot of hope in me and I became part of the youth council... It made a big difference and I grew a lot... I have a lot of hope in me... I always had my goals, but now I know that I will reach them...*

*Aluna & youth leader, 16 years, LPP*

In the end social becoming is founded on not just opportunity and access, but on a sense of competence, self-efficacy and self-esteem that guides the process. The latter denotes “a vision of the future and goes against the wave of disenchantment and ‘eternal present’” (Castro et al. 2002: 470). As demonstrated by Vigh (2006) social navigation is a means to break from the social moratorium and increase one's resources and capacity for action. Through social navigation an agent is in a position to position him- or herself, to let his or her social identity work for him and not against him, even as the terrain is continuously shifting beneath and around; it signals social creativity in the face of social obstructionism such as marginalisation. Social navigation is then a way to build and transform social capital and do social identity, instead of having your identity done for you. Such tactic manoeuvring might just be converted into a strategy for building productive social capital in order to assist the navigation of others as demonstrated by a young man who entered EBRG at age 10 and at the time of research was 18 years, reigning Brazilian champion and licensed *professor de boxe* –and a navigational mark for his *alunos*:

*Q: What does the academia mean to you?*

*A: My life changed. I got a vision. I grew a lot in the sport, socially, in life.*

*Q: So, you think that the sport can make a difference to the young people here?*

*A: You can take many paths in life – paths of good and of bad. Some kids who enter here won't enter the tráfico. The sport gave that to them. Tráfico will give you death or prison – one of the two. I have seen these sides a lot – the good and the bad. If you go to school and do sport then it's a better thing for you in order to grow in life. If you enter tráfico, it's a worse thing.*

*Q: How do you think your life would be today if you weren't a part of the academia?*

*A: Look, the academia offered me a job, I am educated, I am a competitor, and I think that if I hadn't had the sport I wouldn't have been a good kid. But this place offered me so many things.*

*Q: So where do you see yourself in five years?*

*A: I intend to compete a lot, to have a career. I have a goal. After I stop competing I'd like to be at the academia and do like Raff: Give opportunity to children, form persons, form professores. So, I'd like to open an academia. I want to provide the community with opportunities, to give something to the ones without means, to put them in a better position... The academia is a way of surviving, of growing in life. It is an opportunity.*

*Team member, EBRG*

## 9 Conclusion

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“self esteem: \$9  
sense of belonging: \$12  
role model: \$6  
play: priceless”<sup>65</sup>

EBRG and LPP are clearly two very different projects in terms of methods, objectives and capital. However, they do have one important thing in common: Both apply sport as a means to social inclusion. The projects in conjunction and comparison have imparted an understanding of what it is that sport can do: By bringing people together in an organised setting social capital is built and potentially also transformed. When commencing the fieldwork, a preliminary question evolved around the notion of social capital: How is social capital formed and augmented? Social capital has here been applied as the value inherent in social relationships but the value may take on various forms. As sport fundamentally is about participation – about building competitive as well as cooperative relationships – it builds social capital.

When analysing the data I realised that most of the young participants did in fact have social capital, or at least possess it in some regards prior to joining the projects, for what reason I turned my attention to the *quality* of the social capital. The distinction between productive and perverse social capital was helpful to clarify that some social capital may not improve your inclusion as much as hamper it. An example of perverse social capital construction is that of the *facções* operating in the *favelas*, which surely generate social capital but in a form that has little applicability in other social fields. The two *academias* are examples of productive social capital that have certain fungibility in terms of other types of capital, notably symbolic and economic, and in other social fields, e.g. in school or the labour market. By being involved at the *academias* it is clear that the participants build and transform their social capital as their access to social resources is definitely improved. This may be most obvious in the case of LPP where a comprehensive methodology is involved, but even at EBRG the participants’ access is improved as the director has a large network of people to draw on. Sport alone – or any one of the other pillars at LPP alone – would not have the same impact as a holistic effort. However, a pure sports project such as EBRG clearly also has its merits; although the merits do not stem from the fact that sport is on offer as much as they are derived from the *approach* and the *engagement* displayed by the coaches.

Using boxing as a means to attract participants and provide them with positive and meaningful experiences, the projects encourage the development of certain behaviour as participants have to

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<sup>65</sup> <http://www.righttoplay.com/>

adhere to certain rules. Through the implementation of targeted sports activities it is perceivably possible to address social challenges. I argue that this is so when it comes to the investigated projects because they create a free space away from school and home but still incorporate rules. The rules regard the behaviour at the *academias* but also translate into social norms as the participants appropriate what they have learned outside the ring. Through such appropriation the participants position themselves as *alunos de boxe*, as *professoras*, as project workers or something else that stress their identification with the *academia*. With this they actively engage with the preconceptions of their identity that they are often faced with as young people living in the *favela* and reposition themselves. Through the sports-participation they may *do* identity rather than have their identity done for them. By participating the young people (re)construct their social identity as responsible, respected and hard working individuals. This, in turn, is argued to result in increased levels of confidence and self-esteem but also in increased trust in other people – important aspects in transforming social capital and further position oneself. Through this the two projects impart life skills through sporting skills.

The context of marginality shrouding many *favelas* result in a moratorium for many young people who face obstacles in terms of achieving the future that they wish for; in short, it is difficult for them to become. By participating at the *academias*, it is possible to build social capital that allows for more successful navigation. The point is that sport for social good does not create athletes as much as it creates citizens. Sport for social good empowers and creates individuals who may take control over their own identities and lives. The interesting thing about boxing is that it lends itself simultaneously to building physical and social strength.

Sport can provide participants with positive experiences as well as positive role models for maybe the first time in their life and participants can in turn make use of these as navigational marks. The projects contribute to improving educational efforts by retaining students as well as directing them to school. The navigational marks do not indicate coercion but choice: The *aluno* makes his own choice, i.e. sets upon his own ‘destination’. In a similar vein, the projects contribute to keeping the young people out of trouble, most tangibly by diverting them from the streets and the gangs. Sport may only be one in an array of tactics but it certainly plays a role as an instrument for social and personal development. The emphasis on boxing makes for some interesting perspectives in a country notorious for its football craze. Boxing, like other sports, may influence on the emotional, physical and cognitive development of an individual but, more interesting here, it also impacts on the social development in that it requires a high degree of discipline, respect and responsibility which is evident in the *academias* as well as outside.

On a final note, I would like to comment on the way that I have gone about the data collection and analysis: The involvement of two cases and two very different communities has certainly caused

much challenge as well as yielded much insight. While allowing for what I hope is a broad-based investigation, it also complicated the data collection and, more critically, the analysis. On a practical level, had I focused on one project, it would have allowed for a seemingly more focused analysis. However, I have reaped bigger benefits, academically and personally, by conducting multi-sited fieldwork. The analysis and findings carry more weight and I find that some of the insights would not have come to light had it not been for the two different projects. As such the multi-sitedness of the fieldwork created data on the differences of approach in the projects and shed light on the process of social navigation in order to affect on one's identity as well as social capital transformation.

In conclusion, the projects serve as examples of how sport may function as a means to social inclusion. Although the inclusion may, at first glance, seem limited to a productive yet limited bonding social capital at the sports-projects themselves, the lessons learned and navigational competence may bridge to other social fields and extend well into broader society.

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## 10.1 Literature

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## 10.4 Web resources

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Confederação Brasileira de Boxe: <http://www.cbboxe.com.br/>

Dicionário do Aurélio Online: <http://www.dicionariodoaurelio.com/>

Escola de Boxe Raff Giglio, Vidigal, Rio de Janeiro: <http://www.projetoboxevidigal.xpg.com.br/>;  
<http://projeto-boxevidigal.blogspot.com/>; <http://www.raffgiglio.com.br/index.html>

International Platform on Sport and Development: <http://www.sportanddev.org/>

Luta Pela Paz/Fight for Peace, Complexo da Maré, Rio de Janeiro: <http://www.fightforpeace.net/>

Ministério de Esporte - Brazilian Ministry of Sport: <http://portal.esporte.gov.br/>

Right to Play: <http://www.righttoplay.com/>

Sistema de Assentamentos de Baixa Renda – Register of Low-Income Settlements:  
<http://portalgeo.rio.rj.gov.br/sabren/index.htm>

United Nations International Year of Sport and Physical Education:  
<http://www.un.org/sport2005/>

Vila Olímpica da Maré: <http://www.vilaolimpicadamare.org.br/>

Viva Rio: <http://www.vivario.org.br/>