

**Resource Networks and Slum Politics: Grassroots Organizations, Drugs,
and the State in Santiago, Chile and Rio de Janeiro, Brazil**

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I. Introduction

The *favelas* of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil and the *poblaciones* of Santiago, Chile are analogous urban entities; poor neighborhoods that stand in contrast not only to the opulence of wealthier zones of these two Latin American metropolises, but to the claims of progress and economic success of the neoliberal model maintained by the (nominally) leftist governments in both countries. Homogenized in English to “slums” or “shantytowns,” *poblaciones* and *favelas* are distinct, if parallel phenomena. Indeed, even between *poblaciones* or between *favelas* there is a great deal of heterogeneity – some originated as illegal squatter settlements while others were built or authorized by government authorities, and each community has a distinct history of foundation and development. Yet, they have similar origins in migration from hinterlands to major cities, and they share a history of marginalization in times of democracy, and outright repression in times of dictatorship. The residents of *favelas* and *poblaciones* have also historically faced similar social problems: the absence or insufficiency of basic urban and social services, lack of employment, fraught political participation, and more recently the many problems associated with drug trafficking.

For most of the history of the *favelas* and *poblaciones*, local organizations have played an active role in alleviating the main social ills of the moment. Such grassroots organizations have fought to establish new communities, acquire essential services, create networks for mutual support and political resistance, and worked to improve the lives and opportunities of local residents. In the pursuit of these objectives, these groups have used a number of tactics – land seizures, mutual-aid for construction, political protests, and clientelistic exchanges. They have tapped into many outside sources of support and resources, including politicians and political

parties, government offices, churches and ecclesiastical organizations, and NGOs. To a great extent, *favelas* and *poblaciones* are products of their respective histories of local organization.

As these communities continue to be plagued by a great number of social and economic problems, old and new, local organizations continue to play a significant role in attempting to address them. However, the types, forms and methods of local organizations have changed considerably in recent years, forming new and evolving networks to tackle both new and persistent problems. This thesis examines current community organizations in *favelas* and *poblaciones* and the kinds of networks they form to survive and address local problems. Drawing on field research, I compare the organizational landscapes of two communities: the *población* of La Legua in southern Santiago, and the *favela* of Nova Holanda in Rio de Janeiro's industrial North Zone. In each of these communities I examine what types of organizations operate, some of the major local problems that they seek to address, and the networks that they form to access the resources necessary to sustain themselves and pursue their agendas. I situate these networks in the literature on clientelism in South American cities to understand how these organizations' need to tap into resource pools can lead to their incorporation into clientelistic networks in which their access to these resources is conditional upon support for politicians, local officials, or even extra-legal actors like narcotraffickers.

Such networks are not a new phenomenon. Grassroots organizations in both *favelas* and *poblaciones* have long histories of forging links to a number of local and extra-local actors, which they could exploit for community improvement. While in this thesis I argue that networks in both La Legua and Nova Holanda have, at some point, fallen into clientelistic moulds, the networks that have formed in each case are by no means identical, and not all of the distinctions between them can be attributed to differences in the social, political and economic regimes in

each city. Indeed, these two cases cannot be understood without first considering the history of community organizations in low-income areas of Santiago and Rio de Janeiro. Both cities have significant history of local level mobilization to address the problems of the urban poor. In both communities that I study, this history informs the objectives, forms and methods of local organizational forces today.

Thus, before delving into my study of contemporary organizational landscapes of *poblaciones* and *favelas*, I first survey the histories of grassroots organizations in Santiago and Rio de Janeiro, and their role in the creation and development of these communities. In both cities, this history begins in the 1940s, when migration and growth placed significant pressure on already-straining urban systems, and the poor began to seek their own solutions to the urban question. But, in each case the urban poor took a different path to organizing to ameliorate their situation.

In Santiago, grassroots organization was strongly linked to political parties of the left. While such links provided important networks of support in the 1950s and 1960s, it made community organizations in *poblaciones* targets of government repression following the military coup in 1973. And although the 1980s saw some resurgence in social and political organizing, the *poblaciones* faced continuing repression and demobilization. In the transition to democracy, this demobilization had laid the groundwork for the cooptation of new and remaining local organizations by the center-left coalition that has governed the country since 1990.

Organization in Rio de Janeiro's *favelas*, in contrast, was centered not around political groups, but around central community organizations: the residents' associations, which were nearly universal by the late 1960s. From the beginning, these associations actively formed clientelistic networks with politicians through which they could use the electoral weight of the

community to protect or improve the *favela*. But, the military dictatorship in Brazil (1964-1985) targeted this leadership in many *favelas*, and increasingly powerful drug trafficking gangs began to take over remaining residents' associations in the late 1980s. These blows to the traditional clientelistic networks have forced local leadership into other organizational arenas since the 1990s, the most important of which has been grassroots NGOs.

Favelas and the associação de moradores: clientelism and its breakdown

The image of *favelas* on the hillsides of Rio de Janeiro's wealthy and tourist-oriented southern zone is perhaps the most recognizable symbol of urban poverty and inequality in Brazil. While they are still prevalent today in every part of the city, they have a long history of formation, growth and local organization, which begins early in the 20th century. In the late 1920s, economic forces began to bring vast numbers of rural migrants into the city while the policies of both Getúlio Vargas' Estado Novo and Rio's municipal government attempted to push these new urban poor to the city's periphery. With the onset of the global economic crisis in 1929, the foreign markets for Brazil's agricultural exports virtually disappeared, leading to the collapse of the country's rural economy. No longer able to find work in the agricultural sector, many members of the rural working class headed to cities in search of employment.¹ According to census data, city growth in Rio de Janeiro between 1920 and 1940 was 606,200 persons, from 1,157,900 in 1920 to 1,764,000 in 1940, and it is estimated that as much as 60% of this growth was the result of internal migration.²

Inner-city housing was quickly saturated, and Rio's first official urban plan, *Plano Agache*, drafted in 1930, included provisions to relocate the poor from downtown areas to

¹ Julio César Pino. *Family and Favela: The Reproduction of Poverty in Rio de Janeiro*. (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1997): 21.

² George Martine. "Migration, Natural Increase, and City Growth: The Case of Rio de Janeiro." *International Migration Review*, Vol. 6, No. 2, International Migration in Latin America. (Summer 1972): 203.

government housing projects in the suburbs. Although this plan was nominally nullified by Getúlio Vargas' populist national government (1930-1945), its underlying ideas continued to guide official attitudes toward low-income housing settlements.³ However, early plans by the municipal government to systematically relocate urban poor away from the center of the city were unsuccessful, and the combination of government inability to provide alternatives and the wholesale destruction of low-income housing in the inner-city contributed further to the rise of irregular settlements. By the 1940s, informal shantytowns built on hillsides or other unused lands - *favelas* - had become the primary source of housing for the urban poor.⁴

For residents of these growing communities, the fall of Vargas' Estado Novo and the return to democracy meant new opportunities to improve their conditions. The period of the Second Republic (1945-1964) was characterized by the continued expansion and limited improvement of the shantytowns, facilitated by the rise of community organizations and the emergence of clientelistic structures that brought politicians into *favelas* to build large voting blocs from this newly-enfranchised urban underclass.

Census data show an influx of 423,900 new migrants to the city of Rio in the 1950s alone,⁵ and many of these migrants joined family members who had already established themselves in *favelas*. Most *favelas* lacked even the most basic urban services, and those that they had were very limited. Streets were mostly unpaved; many communities had no trash collection services and little or no sanitation; in the absence of piped water, *favelas* relied on wells for their water supply, and groundwater was often contaminated by sewage pits. In some cases, water was available only at a single communal spigot, and electricity was acquired illegally by splicing into

³ Pino, 39.

⁴ Pino, 38.

⁵ Martine, 204.

the grid that serviced wealthier neighborhoods. Thus, the acquisition of basic urban services was one of the principal concerns of a growing number of *favela* residents.

Although the government had little success with plans to remove the *favelas*, the presence of these shantytowns was by no means legal or sanctioned by the state. In fact, throughout this period, the city government maintained an official stance in favor of the eradication of the *favelas*. In 1947, the Commission for the Eradication of the *Favelas* was created, with the stated objectives of “returning *favela* residents to their states of origin, committing *favela* residents over the age of 60 to State Institutions, and expelling from the *favela* all families whose incomes exceeded a set minimum.”⁶ However, the lack of centralized authority and financial resources that such a program would require continued to prevent it from being fully implemented. In this context, although *favelas* continued to multiply and expand, for the most part the improvements made to homes and communities would remain small as long as residents lacked security in their continued possession of the shantytowns.

In order to improve their living conditions, *favela* residents needed to both reduce the risk of removal by the government, and acquire basic services for the community. To achieve both of these objectives, a similar organizational structure was adopted in many *favelas* - the *associação de moradores* (“residents’ association”, AM). First appearing in Zona Sul *favelas* in 1945, the AMs would become the dominant organizational force within the *favelas* citywide for most of the duration of the 20th century. Although each neighborhood had a different type of AM, they generally consisted of one or several elected leaders and a membership base in the community who paid dues and voted in the association’s elections. From the 1940s through the end of the

⁶ Perlman, Janice. *The Myth of Marginality: Urban Poverty and Politics in Rio de Janeiro*. (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1976): 200.

military dictatorship in 1985, resistance to government removal efforts and community improvement would be the two central objectives of the AMs.⁷

When there was strong community support, this organizational system provided a method through which the *favela* residents could turn their aggregate votes into some form of political clout in order to defend their communities and pressure the municipal and state governments for services. The many opportunities that arose from politicians and other patrons offering help in exchange for votes drew residents' associations into clientelistic networks in this period. These networks would frame the relationship between the *favelas* and the public power for decades to come.

It became a regular occurrence for a campaigning politician to approach community leaders (usually the president of the AM) and offer some service provision or assurances that the *favelas* would not be targeted for removal, contingent upon the community supporting them in an election. Although this occurred predominantly at the local and state election level, there were some cases in which candidates for national office engaged *favela* leadership. At other times, *favela* leadership would actively seek out the assistance of local officials to help in their cause, even in times where there were no imminent elections. The raw voting power of the *favelas* created incentives for local elected officials to intervene on behalf of residents. As Robert Gay points out, the consistent ability of politicians to fulfill commitments and of residents' associations to deliver the communities' votes reinforced these clientelistic arrangements.⁸

Throughout the period of the Second Republic, there was concern among conservative elites that *favelas* were potential breeding grounds for communists and subversive agitators. In

⁷ Perlman, 30.

⁸ Robert Gay. "The even more difficult transition from clientelism to citizenship: Lessons from Brazil" in *Out of the Shadows: Political Action and the Informal Economy in Latin America*, ed. Patricia Fernandez-Kelly and Jon Shefner (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2006), 200-201.

response to this perceived threat, legislation was signed in 1947 calling on the Fundação Leão XIII (“Leo XIII Foundation”), a government-sponsored aid agency operated by the Catholic Church, to provide services to *favelas* in order to defuse support for leftist groups and ensure political loyalty to the regime.⁹ The Foundation worked to prevent communities from gaining organizational autonomy, which the government found especially unfavorable when attempting to remove a *favela*. The direct provision of some services by the Foundation reduced the need for residents to take collective action to acquire them, and thus reduced the importance of the residents’ associations. These efforts to deactivate organization within the *favelas* and co-opt *favela* residents through the direct (if limited) provision of services shows another facet of clientelism – the susceptibility to cooptation. In these *favelas*, the community organizations that elsewhere became the best equipped to resist state removal efforts were allowed to atrophy.

Until 1960, although the government’s official stance had remained in favor of *favela* removal since the Estado Novo, the value of the *favelados* votes and the prohibitively high costs of large-scale relocation projects limited elected officials’ willingness to pursue removal efforts. That year, however, Carlos Lacerda was elected governor of Guanabara State (now the Greater Rio metropolitan area), and took a hard-line stance in favor of removal.¹⁰ In 1962 the government implemented a program that proposed the creation of housing far from the center of the city in order to “clean up” the downtown area.¹¹ The idea of removal to an area at considerable distance from downtown Rio added a new dimension to the problems of *favela* residents facing the threat of removal. Now, beyond the obvious concern of losing their homes, they would be relegated to sites far from major sources of employment. Public transportation

⁹ Pino, 138.

¹⁰ Pino, 137-138.

¹¹ Mariana Cavalcanti. “Memoria y Cotidianidad de la Represión en el Morro do Borel.” (In: Elizabeth Jelin; Ponciano del Pino. (Org.). *Luchas Locales, Comunidades e Identidades*. 1 ed. Madrid y Buenos Aires: Siglo XXI, 2003, v. 6): 182-183.

from the outer periphery of the city was both extremely time consuming and often prohibitively expensive for poor workers. Thus, for *favela* residents and organizations, Lacerda's election meant an increasing focus on the threat of removal rather than the acquisition of services. To help coordinate these efforts, in 1963 many AM leaders of Rio's *favelas* formed the Federação de Associações de *Favelas* do Estado de Guanabara ("Federation of *Favela* Associations of Guanabara State", FAFEG). This city-wide federation worked to prevent removal efforts and to negotiate with the government of Rio as a collective entity representing the *favelas*.¹²

However, in March of 1964, a military coup began to dissolve the democratic institutions and the organizational structures, and the clientelistic networks that had allowed *favelas* to flourish since the fall of the Estado Novo began to deteriorate. The early years of the authoritarian regime were marked by continued city- and state-level democratic institutions, which allowed many of the clientelistic networks to remain intact and effective. There were continued government efforts at removal until Lacerda left office in 1965, but many were successfully averted by residents' associations and with help from FAFEG¹³ But beginning in 1968, more *favelas* began to be targeted for removal, and the authoritarian regime tightened its control and increased repression, eliminating the potential for public outcry, community mobilization, and democratic recourse that had been the main resources of the residents' associations for nearly two decades. In 1969 FAFEG was dismantled as many of its leaders were killed or detained, and was not replaced until 1975 with the formation of the *Federação de Associações de Favelas do Estado do Rio de Janeiro* (Federation of *Favela* Associations of Rio de Janeiro State), and this new organization adopted a more passive attitude toward the military

¹² Arias, Enrique Desmond. *Drugs and Democracy in Rio de Janeiro: Trafficking, Social Networks, & Public Security*. (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2006): 23, 25.

¹³ Pino, 148.

government.¹⁴ In the period from 1968 to 1978, resistance from residents' associations collapsed in the face of government force, and approximately 70 *favelas* were destroyed with about 100,000 residents removed to government-built housing elsewhere in the city.¹⁵

The impact of the regime's repressive *favela* removal campaign on community organization was devastating. In a survey taken in the late 1960s, Perlman (1976) showed that, while in earlier cases of removal threats *favela* residents had been more likely to take active responses, by the end of the decade residents were more likely to adopt passive responses, including collaboration with the authorities.¹⁶ Removed communities tended to show a great deal of disillusionment with local organization after the failure of AMs to prevent removal, or the co-optation of associations by the authorities. Much of the original leadership of eradicated *favelas* had been detained or disappeared by the military during removal campaigns, or they were placed in different housing projects from the rest of their former communities. Those who tried to form similar associations in the housing projects often met with either distrust or lack of interest of other residents.¹⁷

The years between 1978 and 1985 saw a decline in state repression and increasing democratization. However, as Mariana Cavalcanti (2003) notes, "the opening toward democratic institutionality was concentrated in the media, labor unions and political parties, and didn't include *favelado* movements. *Favela* politics returned to the clientelistic mold of the 1930s and '40s."¹⁸ Indeed, beginning in the late 1970s, politicians returned to the *favelas* in search of votes, but the weakened position of the residents' associations in the wake of the long period of repression limited their ability to organize for effective collective bargaining.

¹⁴ Arias 26.

¹⁵ Arias, 25.

¹⁶ Perlman, 210; table 34.

¹⁷ Perlman, 219.

¹⁸ Cavalcanti, 185 (Translation mine).

In 1982, the military allowed the first elections for state governors since 1965, although it used a great deal of political maneuvering to weaken the opposition. A ban on multiple opposition parties was lifted to allow political divisions to occur, and electoral alliances between parties were prohibited. In response to this, the two main opposition parties – the Party of the Brazilian Democratic Movement (PMDB) and the Popular Party (PP) – reunited as the PMDB. However, conflict between the two political groups of the PMDB in Rio de Janeiro state allowed a relatively unknown third party - the Democratic Laborist Party (PDT) - to win. The PDT was a new party created by exiled socialist intellectuals and activists, and was committed to redistributive policies that would favor the poorest segments of Brazilian society. (Gay, 27-28)

However, the first government of Leonel Brizola (1983-1987), the newly elected PDT governor, engaged in clientelistic populism in the *favelas*. The state delivered services directly to the *favelas* through PDT political operatives, without the involvement of individual politicians that was typical of the earlier clientelistic network¹⁹ (I further explore the specific type of clientelism engaged in by the PDT in chapter two). Some community leaders even report that during this period, the PDT threatened to withhold service provision from *favelas* whose leadership belonged to or supported other political parties.²⁰

In the same period as the emergence of the PDT as a major political player in Rio de Janeiro, another important process was occurring in the realm of *favela* politics. The Workers' Party (PT), officially formed in 1982 from a union movement beginning in São Paulo in the late 1970s, began to build support and train leaders in Rio's *favelas*. Many young leaders in the resurgent favela movement were first trained as PT militants, and party members began

¹⁹ Gay, Robert. *Popular Organization and Democracy in Rio de Janeiro* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1994), 81-83.

²⁰ Pandolfi, Dulce Chaves and Mario Grynzspan, organizadores. *A favela fala : depoimentos ao CPDOC*. (Rio de Janeiro: FGV Ed., 2003): 45-47.

(although unsuccessfully) to campaign for leadership of the newly reformed Federation of Favela Associations of Rio de Janeiro in 1983.²¹

In the early eighties, while the old organizational structures were slowly being rebuilt, the explosion of the sale and shipment of cocaine as a lucrative illicit industry in Rio brought increasingly well-armed and organized trafficking organizations into the *favelas*.²² The rise of the drug gangs has been the most defining change that has faced the *favelas* in the last thirty years. Small criminal operations had existed for a long time in the *favelas*, taking advantage of the limited police presence in these neglected slums. But by the 1980s they had been replaced by considerably more organized forces, and their criminal repertoire had shifted from smaller-scale theft to bank robberies and, most significantly, narcotics trafficking. The origin of this increasing organization actually began in the late 1960s, when Rio's common criminals in the Ilha Grande prison were housed together with political prisoners of the authoritarian government, from whom they learned organizational strategies that were employed to form what was known as "*o coletivo*" ("the collective"). *O coletivo* developed a code of behavior and security, and arranged collections and coordination for activities like prison escapes. From the ideas of *O coletivo*, semi-hierarchical drug gangs with central leadership in Rio's prisons were formed, the largest of which was the *Comando Vermelho* ("Red Command") - still the most powerful trafficking organization in the city.²³

Growing corruption associated with the rise of the drug gangs also led to increased violence in the *favelas* and delegitimized the police force in the eyes of many *favela* residents.

²¹ Gay, 27.

²² Cavalcanti, 185.

²³ Leeds, Elizabeth. 1996. "Cocaine and Parallel Polities in the Brazilian Urban Periphery." *Latin American Research Review* 31: 52-54.

This allowed the gangs greater flexibility to operate and expand within the *favelas*.²⁴ Goldstein (2003) further attributes the tendency of residents to ally themselves with the traffickers to “the police’s routine treatment of the poor as criminals.”²⁵ This has created a situation in which, in the absence the state’s ability to impose rule of law, traffickers provide their own parallel system of justice and become local institutions of conflict resolution. Rather than replace the residents’ associations in the *favelas*, the gangs often represented parallel power structures, which has led to conflict. A former AM president from Nova Holanda explained that, “often, a resident would want to build a house, but the [association] president wouldn’t let him, because of sewage lines, for example. This person might not like that decision and he would complain to the traffickers. The president has to be firm; he must take the situation seriously and explain the situation clearly. But there are many association presidents who have ended up dead.”²⁶ Not only has there been conflict between residents’ associations and gang leaders, but traffickers often sought to take over local residents’ associations, the implications of which I examine further in later chapters. This was hardly a peaceful process; in the last few years of the 1980s, the city’s police reported the murders of some 240 community leaders.²⁷

Apart from the trafficking organizations, the other important new force in the *favelas* that emerged during this period is grassroots NGOs. While some of these NGOs are “non-governmental” only in a nominal sense (they are not extensions of local government, but depend on government funding), the international visibility of poverty and violence in the *favelas* of Rio de Janeiro has attracted increased funding of such groups by international NGOs and private donors. These NGOs generally provide some services to residents of *favelas*, which range from

²⁴ Arias, 74-78.

²⁵ Donna Goldstein. *Laughter Out of Place: Race, Class, Violence, and Sexuality in a Rio Shantytown*. (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2003): 180.

²⁶ Pandolfi and Grynszpan, 147 (Translation mine).

²⁷ Arias, 29.

cultural activities and human rights education, to projects such as child care. They form broad funding networks with international non-profit organizations, government offices and wealthy patrons in order to be able to deliver these services.²⁸ While many claim that grassroots NGOs allow the government to retreat from some service provision to the *favelas*, many of these organizations are involved in proposing changes to government policy on *favelas* and promoting improvement to *favelas* more broadly.

It is in this context, following the rise of drug trafficking gangs, that the legitimacy of residents' associations has declined and grassroots NGOs have become increasingly important local players. This shift away from the established clientelistic networks of the central associations has produced the new and complex networks that characterize the organizational landscapes of many *favelas* in Rio de Janeiro today. These developments stand in contrast to the case of Santiago, where political parties played a more central role in organizing, and the repression of the 1970s and 1980s crippled not clientelistic networks, but strong social and political movements.

Mobilization and repression in the *poblaciones*

Unlike Rio's *favelas*, which were formed primarily as informal and unregulated constructions that have been improved and formalized *ex post facto*, the *poblaciones* of Santiago are predominantly government-built, or were constructed by residents themselves on regulated and urbanized sites. This gives the low-income housing of Santiago a different character from the haphazard and precarious appearance of the *favelas*, and this difference is reflective of a distinct, if parallel, struggle for access and improvement to urban housing in Santiago.

In the 1930s and 1940s, the Santiago Metropolitan Area saw demographic trends and infrastructural changes similar to those in Rio in the same period. The global economic crisis

²⁸ Arias, 34.

prompted waves of rural-urban migration, as well as the return of workers from the nitrate mines of the Chilean north. In the early part of the 20th century, most of Santiago's urban poor were concentrated in inner-city tenements, called *conventillos*, which became increasingly crowded, dilapidated, and prohibitively expensive with the sharp influx of migrants to the city. Further exacerbating this problem, the government began to demolish *conventillos* in the downtown areas in 1932 to make way for the construction of new office buildings and residential space for government workers. These pressures on existing low-income housing led the urban poor increasingly to build their own shelters in what were called *poblaciones callampas*, named for the *callampa*, a type of mushroom that grows overnight.²⁹

The *poblaciones callampas* were analogous to early *favelas*; they were built on unused land on the banks of the Mapocho River, which runs east to west through the center of the city, and the Zanjón de la Aguada, in the southern zone; they were assembled from scrap materials, had no urban services, and were extremely precarious. However, unlike the *favelas*, residents of most *poblaciones callampas* perceived them to be only a transitory housing solution.³⁰ Thus, while *favela* residents would organize to resist removal and acquire government services, inhabitants of the *poblaciones callampas* would mobilize to pressure the government to provide them with permanent alternative housing solutions. It is worth noting that there were exceptions to this. Some early *poblaciones*, including La Legua, were created by planned land invasions or government-sanctioned occupations. These *poblaciones* were built in a more orderly fashion, with demarcated plots and on less precarious lands. In these cases, local organization tended to

²⁹ Garcés, Mario. *Tomando su sitio: El movimiento de pobladores de Santiago, 1957-1970*. LOM Ediciones, Santiago; 2002: 55-58.

³⁰ Marticorena, Dafne. "Algunas soluciones al problema de las *poblaciones callampas*." Tesis para optar al título de Asistente Social, de la Escuela Elvira Matte de Cruchaga, Santiago, Chile; 1959: 13. Cited in Garcés, Mario. *Tomando su sitio: El movimiento de pobladores de Santiago, 1957-1970*. LOM Ediciones, Santiago; 2002: 61.

be oriented more toward service acquisition and community improvement, rather than permanent relocation.

The trends that gave birth to the *poblaciones callampas* continued throughout the 1940s and 1950s. From 1940 to 1952, the population of Santiago grew by an average of 20,448 per year, and continued to increase throughout the 1950s, reaching a growth of 54,900 in 1959.³¹ To respond to the problems posed by the large and growing housing deficit, the government of Carlos Ibáñez del Campo (1952-1958) created in 1954 the *Corporación de la Vivienda* (“Housing Corporation”, CORVI), an organ of the Public Works Ministry dedicated exclusively to the creation of low-income housing. CORVI set annual targets for the construction of new low-income housing, but consistently failed to meet them; even in its first year it managed to build only 21 percent of its projected total. It was in this context of unmet government promises and a mounting housing crisis that leftist political party militants began to arrive in the *poblaciones callampas* and foment the organization of residents and increase their capacity to make demands on the state. These militants helped residents form block committees and larger *Comités de Sin Casa* (“Committees of the Homeless”), and arranged meetings with leftist politicians - mainly from the Communist and Socialist Parties, but also Christian Democrats - who could take their demands directly to CORVI.³² However, the consistent failure of CORVI to meet its targets for housing provision (targets that were modest, given the scale of the housing problem) led these newly formed local organizations to pursue alternative means to acquire better housing.

³¹ Matellart, Armand. “Urbanización y Desequilibrios Sociales (un análisis del fenómeno urbano, sus causas y consecuencias en Santiago, Valparaíso, Concepción y Antofagasta).” (DESAL, Santiago, 1963), Segunda Sección, p.2. Cited in Garcés, Mario. *Tomando su sitio: El movimiento de pobladores de Santiago, 1957-1970*. (LOM Ediciones, Santiago; 2002), 32.

³² Garcés (2002), 112-128.

The combination of frustration with the unfulfilled promises of a failed housing policy, deteriorating living conditions in the *poblaciones callampas*, and organization of the *Comités de Sin Casa* by leftist militants produced a new strategy for the acquisition of a solution to the housing problem: the “*toma de terrenos*,” or land seizure. *Tomas* were coordinated by the existing organizational structures in the *poblaciones callampas*, often with the help of party militants and elected officials. They generally took place at night, when hundreds or even thousands of families would occupy a site (in many cases a site owned by CORVI and designated for future construction) with only the materials for basic shelters and Chilean flags. The leadership of the *toma* would contact both the press and politicians to inform them of the event and request their presence to deter repressive action by the police. While some *tomas* were successfully repelled by the authorities, many resulted in either the establishment of a new *población*, or the relocation of participants to available government housing sites.³³ Between 1957 and 1973, the *toma* would be a principal avenue to either directly gain access to urban land or pressure the government to provide an alternative. Successive governments altered or replaced previous housing policies to attempt to reduce the housing deficit, but as each new plan faltered frustrated residents of *poblaciones callampas*, overcrowded *poblaciones*, and *conventillos* would mobilize to pursue a more direct solution to the problem.

This approach to acquiring housing had two important effects on the organizational landscapes of the new *poblaciones* that it produced. First, they were formed with strong ties to political parties of the left. Unlike the neighborhood associations of the *favelas*, which were largely apolitical and negotiated with individual politicians, the *comités* had strong ties to parties of the left. As is apparent from the process of the *tomas*, these political ties were crucial not just in initial organizing, but also in high-level intervention to protect the new *poblaciones* from

³³ Garcés (2002), Chapters 2 & 3.

repression. These political affiliations would continue to be important to community organizations in the *poblaciones*. Additionally, the need for extensive previous organization to plan and successfully execute a *toma* meant that these nascent communities were born with a significant organizational infrastructure already in place. Once the new *población* was established, members of the *comités de sin casa* formed *Juntas de Vecinos* (Neighborhood organizations), *Centros de Madres* (Mothers' Centers), and other social and political groups. These organizations were instrumental in the mutual-aid construction of houses and infrastructure, and in pressuring government offices for the provision of services, and would remain central elements in the organizational life of *poblaciones* until the military coup of 1973.

Important in the consolidation of these forms of community organization in the *poblaciones* were the policies of the government of Eduardo Frei Montalva (1964-1970) toward the urban poor. The repertoire of organizations and methods for articulating demands and pressuring the state to provide solutions to the city's serious housing problems made the *poblaciones* an ideal target for his policies of "*promoción popular*" ("popular promotion") - a program intended to incorporate excluded sectors into the national system. In the *poblaciones*, this meant the provision of leadership training, organizational support, and basic infrastructure to *juntas de vecinos*, *centros de madres*, and *clubes deportivos* (athletic clubs) throughout Santiago.³⁴ Critics claimed that *promoción popular* was a political maneuver by Frei's Christian Democrat party, intended to wrest support of the *población* residents away from the Communist and Socialist parties, which had been instrumental in organizing them for more than a decade. Regardless of political intent, the support provided to these organizations allowed them to crystallize, and had important consequences for the broader housing movement.

³⁴ Correa Sutil, Sofía et al. *Historia del Siglo XX Chileno: Balance Paradojal*. Editorial Sudamericana. Santiago, 2001: 251.

In addition to *promoción popular*, the Frei administration promised to revamp the ailing housing program of previous administrations. Aside from a projected boost in construction of new low-income housing, the new policy also included *Operación Sitio*, a program to provide the poorest families with minimal homes or at least urbanized sites on which they could build. In a six day period in August 1965, more than 62,000 families registered for this program - a clear indicator of the gravity of the housing situation in Santiago at the time.³⁵ Again impatient with the government's lack of speed in providing a solution, 1967 saw the beginning of a new process of what Mario Garcés (2002) calls "criticism in practice;" urban poor in the northern zone of the city, organized in *comités de sin casa* conducted a *toma* and established the *población* Herminda de la Victoria. The *toma* of "la Herminda" was merely the tip of the iceberg, as more and more of Santiago's urban poor (organized into *juntas de vecinos* and *comités* thanks to *promoción popular*) gave up on what they perceived as a failed government policy, and began to take matters into their own hands. Between 1967 and 1970, 155 *tomas* were carried out,³⁶ and continued to occur following the election of Salvador Allende in 1970. They would be a regular occurrence until the final days leading up to the military coup of September 11, 1973.

Perhaps the most profound change that occurred in the organizational life of the *poblaciones* during Allende's revolutionary government was that they played a significant role in the implementation of the government's policies at the neighborhood level. Particularly notable is that the *juntas de vecinos*, *centros de madres*, and other social groups – the same organizations that were consolidated and strengthened by Frei's policies - would come to participate in the *Juntas de Abastecimiento y de Precios* ("Provision and Price Groups," JAP). Originally formed in 1971, the JAP were intended to play a role in ensuring adequate supply of basic consumption

³⁵ Garcés (2002), 294-312.

³⁶ Garcés (2002), 349-351.

goods at official prices in the *poblaciones*. Although originally created by a decree of the Communist Party, the JAP were given official status by the government in 1972. As the economic situation worsened, these groups became important actors in maintaining official prices and resisting and reporting speculation by vendors. They were considered by the revolutionary government to be an important instrument of “popular power,” participating directly in micro-level management of the economic system.³⁷ What is significant is that during this period the local level organizations were not only connected to political parties, but were engaged directly with the state in the implementation of Allende’s socialist economic model. Following the coup of 1973, this fact would make community organizations and their leadership targets of the military’s campaign of repression in the *poblaciones*.

The months following the military coup led by General Augusto Pinochet saw considerable violence and terror in the *poblaciones*. This was not only during the first days where, in some *poblaciones* - including La Legua - there was armed conflict between leftist militants and the police³⁸, but also in the massive and systematic murder and detention of social and political activists. Union leaders, leftist party members, and social organizers were targeted to cripple the capacity of the *poblaciones* to organize resistance or make demands on the state as they had since the 1950s.³⁹ In less than a year, a campaign of detention, disappearance, torture and assassination had eliminated nearly an entire generation of leadership in the *poblaciones*, and led to considerable social demobilization.

³⁷ Morales, Eduardo. *Los sectores populares en el periodo 1970-1973*. Documento FLACSO; Santiago, Chile, 1983: 49-50, 60-61.

³⁸ A detailed account of armed conflict and military raids in La Legua can be found in: Garcés, Mario and Sebastián Leiva, *El Golpe en La Legua: Los caminos de la historia y la memoria*. LOM Ediciones, Santiago; 2005.

³⁹ A. Bruey “Organizing Community: Defying Dictatorship in Working-Class Santiago de Chile, 1973-1983” (PhD diss., Yale University, 2008) [Draft], Ch. 3, 14-15.

But repression also created new needs. Collective dining halls were quickly established to feed the children of political prisoners, and local Catholic churches began to open their doors to those in need of assistance. Thus began a new chapter in local organization, one centered around subsistence, but that eventually gave way to reorganization and remobilization of social and political actors. The economic “shock treatment” imposed by the dictatorship’s technocrats in 1975 was felt strongly in the *poblaciones* as the manufacturing sector collapsed, employment fell, and the social welfare system was dismantled and privatized.

The crippling of the social safety net produced an explosion in the organization of collective dining halls and other social organizations under the auspices of the Catholic Church. These groups served not only for subsistence, but became an arena of organization with church protection in which remaining social and political leaders and activist youth could reestablish social and political networks. As more local political activists joined (particularly members of the Communist Party), these groups became increasingly radicalized. As the decade progressed, they served incubators of political resistance, and platforms for protest. These began with small “lightning protests” near the *poblaciones*, but later included city-wide protests of associations of relatives of the detained and disappeared (AFDD), and this incubation culminated in the strong participation of *población* residents in the national protests of 1983-1985.⁴⁰ The growth in local political organization was met with repression following the national protests, and organizations such as human rights groups began to decline after 1985. However, subsistence organizations like the *ollas comunes* (common kitchens), continued to be active through the end of the 1980s.⁴¹

During the national protest movement of the early 1980s, however, began another important political process. The Christian Democrats and parts of the Socialist party formed a

⁴⁰ Bruey, Chapters 3-5.

⁴¹ Valdés, Teresa and Marisa Weinstein. *Mujeres que Sueñan: las organizaciones de pobladoras : 1973-1989*, (Libros FLACSO; Santiago, Chile; 1993), 155-158.

political alliance to push for a return to democracy. This was the first in a number of agreements that produced the Concertación, a coalition of fourteen political parties that defeated Pinochet in the plebiscite on his rule in 1988. Despite being instrumental in the political reorganization that culminated in the national protests, the Communist party remained outside this coalition. The Communists feared that participating in the plebiscite would serve only to legitimize the institutional changes made by the military regime, and thus remained in favor of popular rebellion as a means to remove Pinochet.⁴² This had two important effects on the relationship between political parties and organizations in the *poblaciones*. First, it left the Communist party politically marginalized and cost it the support of more moderate sectors. Dominance within the political left thus shifted to the Socialists – a shift from which the Communist party has not yet recovered. This also meant that the new dominant sectors in the left would shy away from the popular mobilization supported by the Communists, and opt for an electoral process within the institutional framework set by Pinochet.

As Roberts (1995) explains, fear that the political right would shy away from the democratic arena, coupled with the economic growth of the late 1980s, led the Concertación to steer clear of popular mobilization advocated by the Communist party, and accept the neoliberal economic model put in place by Pinochet.⁴³ Not interested in grassroots mobilization, the Concertación sought to insulate central government from popular pressure, and the process of decentralization and municipalization that had occurred under the dictatorship provided an institutional framework that would allow such insulation. The interventions in popular organizations was limited to programs like FOSIS, a social fund that, as Paley argues, led grassroots organizations to see “benefits – financial and otherwise – in conforming to the role for

⁴² Roberts, Kenneth M. *Deepening Democracy?: The Modern Left and Social Movements in Chile and Peru*, (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998): 126-130.

⁴³ Roberts: 144-148.

organizations designated by the state.”⁴⁴ A far cry from the popular mobilizations of previous periods, whether to make demands on the state or delegitimize the authoritarian regime, this new role designated by the state was one of small-scale social activities and assistentialist service provision. It is in this post-transition context that I examine the community organizations in La Legua and their interactions with the state, particularly via the municipal government, in the following chapters.

Another important shift in the transition to democracy occurred in nongovernmental organizations, which prior to the transition had a more important role in the *poblaciones* than they do today. Much of the support for social organizations in Santiago’s urban periphery in the 1980s came from NGOs, which became increasingly important during the dictatorship period. As Paley points out, academics and professionals from the public service sector found themselves unemployed as the state took over the university system and cut social services. “Seeking new venues in which to continue their work, they found refuge in nongovernmental organizations that ranged from institutes dedicated to research, to popular education projects that sought to provide training and education to residents in poor sectors.”⁴⁵ However, while in Rio de Janeiro the NGO sector took off in the 1990s, funding for such groups in Chile declined sharply as it lost the emblematic status afforded to it as an international poster child for repressive dictatorship. After the transition to democracy in 1990, the limited international NGO funding that continued to come into the country now did so through the Chilean government.⁴⁶

⁴⁴ Paley, Julia. *Marketing Democracy: Power and Social Movements in Post-Dictatorship Chile*, (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2001): 181.

⁴⁵ Paley, 67-68.

⁴⁶ Paley, 131.

Parallels and Divergence

The histories of community organizations in these two cities share several commonalities: Both were central actors in the acquisition of housing for large segments of the urban poor, as well as access to services and the improvement of the quality of life for residents. In both Santiago and Rio de Janeiro, grassroots organizations were actively engaged in resistance to state repression, although the character of repression and resistance were considerably different. Both have also seen a degree of demobilization and fragmentation in the early 1990s.

These two parallel but distinct histories provide the context for my examination of the networks formed by grassroots organizations in Nova Holanda and La Legua. In the following chapter, I present a framework on clientelism in cities of South America to argue that, in the context of material deprivation that has accompanied neoliberal economic policies in both Chile and Brazil, the success of these organizations is determined largely by their ability to provide some immediate and tangible benefits for their constituents. This means that the networks through which organizations acquire resources are a central feature that must be examined in order to understand the nature and role of these groups in the neoliberal era. I also argue that an understanding of these networks must include analysis of the roles of actors such as municipal governments and drug traffickers, rather than focusing exclusively on “traditional” clientelistic actors.

In chapters three and four I present evidence from my field research in La Legua and Nova Holanda. I argue that the municipal government’s monopoly on the provision of resources to local organizations in La Legua has led to the formation of a clientelistic network linking many local organizational leaders to the municipality. In Nova Holanda, in contrast, I argue that traditional clientelistic structures have been delegitimized by their appropriation by drug

traffickers. At the same time, access to national and international resource pools without local political intervention has allowed leaders in grassroots NGOs to acquire resources without the need to engage in clientelism.

Finally, chapter five highlights the centrality of a new type of local leader, which I call the “resource capturer,” to organizations in both La Legua and Nova Holanda. The resource capturer is adept at tapping into available resource pools, maintaining contacts with financiers and navigating both state and NGO social service networks. The importance of the resource capturer results from the need of local organizations to provide some immediate, tangible benefits to their members in order to maintain membership and survive. Finally, I argue that despite the parallel in this new type of leadership in La Legua and Nova Holanda, the networks that local organizations formed are divergent because of the distinct types of resource pools available to local groups in each city.

II. The Politics of Exchange: Lessons on Clientelism from the Urban Peripheries of South America

In his study of democracy and social movements in post-authoritarian Chile, Kenneth Roberts (1998) explains that neoliberal reforms, put in place by the dictatorship and maintained in the transition to democracy, have multiple important effects on subaltern sectors of society. First, and perhaps most obviously, they create economic hardships for these sectors, the result of deregulation and labor “flexibilization” in labor-surplus economies, as well as the retreat of the state from the provision of a social safety net on which these sectors had previously relied. Second, the market-based system, combined with political decentralization and municipalization of the provision of public goods and services, creates a structure of opportunities that shifts away from the universalized political problem-solving of the past, characterized by broader discourses articulated by political parties, and toward a “proclivity of the atomized majority to pursue individualist solutions to their problems”.⁴⁷ The result is that social organization is reduced to what Roberts calls “segmented collectivism,” in which groups organize and mobilize to pursue solutions to particular, localized problems rather than forming an “alternative political project” – in other words, without attaching individual grievances to a universalized political discourse that might seek to address the underlying structural problems instead of mere palliative problem-solving.⁴⁸

Clientelism is one of the most important mechanisms through which this “segmented collectivism” operates. By definition, clientelism is antithetical to the formation of a broader collective agenda (or “alternative political project”). The exchange between patrons and

⁴⁷ Roberts, 69.

⁴⁸ Roberts, 54.

clients of solutions for support is inherently individual problem solving, and patrons and brokers have an important stake in *maintaining* the underlying structures that create the need for individuals and groups (their “clients”) to pursue segmented collective action. By the same token, some governments, suggests Roberts, like the Concertación in Chile, have an interest in avoiding the articulation of universalized demands that challenge the status quo and might threaten the hegemony of dominant structures, as well as their own political dominance.⁴⁹

In this chapter, I will examine the literature clientelism in poor urban communities in South America. Following Roberts, I consider these networks as manifestations of segmented collectivism in the context of neoliberal systems put in place by authoritarian regimes and maintained in the transitions to democracy in both Chile and Brazil. I will examine the different forms that these networks can take, and the different ways in which they interact with and incorporate the communities, grassroots organizations, the public power, and illegal actors.

Forms of clientelism

Clientelism in Latin American urban peripheries is, generally, characterized by the exchange of votes by a community for the provision of infrastructure, goods, or services by a politician or political party. The exchange is mediated by brokers, usually community leaders, grassroots organizations, or operatives of political parties, which (implicitly or explicitly) negotiate the terms of the exchange between the patron and the community. These exchanges, however, can take a range of quantitatively and qualitatively distinct forms, giving rise to the formation of different types of local networks through which communities acquire services and politicians acquire support. The literature on clientelism in poor

⁴⁹ Roberts, 71.

communities of South American cities details two basic forms of clientelism; one that is characterized by explicit periodic transactions between brokers and patrons, and another based on the creation of enduring ties between patrons and communities, formed by a longer process of provision and problem solving. Here I will examine these two forms of clientelism, and also consider the literature on how municipal government and drug trafficking organizations attempt to create or incorporate themselves into these networks.

“Thick” and “Thin” clientelism

In order to understand the networks through which resources are channeled to community organizations in La Legua and Nova Holanda, and how those channels shape the role of these organizations in their respective communities, it is useful to begin by looking at the dichotomy between the two basic forms that clientelistic networks can take. The literature differentiates between what Robert Gay labels “thick” and “thin” clientelism⁵⁰ the former characterized by explicit exchange of votes for services, while the latter involves implicit exchanges.

Gay describes thick clientelism as “nakedly transactional,”⁵¹ and essentially apolitical. In his study of two the Rio *favelas* in the 1980s, he presents the case of Vila Brasil, where the interaction between the president of the neighborhood association and Rio politicians offers a clear example of this type of clientelism. At each election, the president of the association would take offers from candidates that approached him soliciting the votes of the community. Depending on the importance of the election, the resources of the candidate, and the availability of competing offers, the president was able to acquire contributions that ranged

⁵⁰ Gay (2006), 209. In his book, *Popular Organization and Democracy in Rio de Janeiro* (1997), Gay does not make the distinction between “thick” and “thin” clientelism. These labels come from his later essay “The even more difficult transition from clientelism to citizenship: Lessons from Brazil” (2006), which draws on Auyero’s ideas of implicit and long-term exchange networks.

⁵¹ Gay, 56.

from a set of soccer shirts for the local team to the paving of the *favela*'s roads and provision of electricity and water. In this case, the president of the association demanded that the good or service be provided prior to the election, although in other documented case in Rio, provision was often contingent upon the candidate's election.⁵² In this example, the mechanism of exchange is clear; potential patrons negotiate with a local broker to establish the terms of the exchange with clients. Finally, once the transaction occurs, the relationship between patron and clients ends.

Functionally, thick clientelism requires the brokers to maintain credibility on both sides of the exchange. In order to successfully acquire services, the broker has to convince politicians that he does, in fact, have the capacity to provide votes, and in order to be able to reliably provide votes, the broker has to convince community members that he can acquire services. This exchange structure also allows (or perhaps even requires) the network to be apolitical in nature. As Gay observes, outside of each election in which the broker strikes a deal with a politician, he "expresses no preference or allegiance to any politician, party, or ideology".⁵³ The thick clientelistic structure takes the form of a mechanism through which individual exchanges can be made, and no lasting ties to politicians or political parties are formed.

While a structure of explicit exchange of votes for services is the most obvious (and "traditional") form of clientelism, both Gay and Javier Auyero (2001) show us that clientelistic networks can also be based on implicit exchange, and are founded in the sort of long-term ties of which thick clientelistic structures are devoid. In this "thin" clientelism,

⁵² Several accounts of such exchanges can be found in Janice Perlman's book, *The Myth of Marginality: Urban Poverty and Politics in Rio de Janeiro* (1976), and Julio Cesar Pino's *Family and Favela: The Reproduction of Poverty in Rio de Janeiro* (1997).

⁵³ Gay (1994), 56.

brokers act as distributors of goods, to which they have access through their connection to a patron (in Auyero's study, the Peronist party in power in Cospito City, Argentina). Over time, brokers form part of what Auyero calls "problem-solving networks," to which community members turn for help in meeting basic needs (food and medicines from government programs, municipal jobs, etc). While in "thick" clientelism the provision of services is offered as part of an exchange, in "thin clientelism it is presented as a "gift," with no reciprocation demanded.⁵⁴

Gay observes a similar phenomenon in the *favela* of Vidigal, where the neighborhood association made demands for service provision directly to state agencies, rather than exchanging votes for the patronage of politicians. The association's leadership attempted to change the community's perception of service provision, which they said should be considered a right of citizenship, rather than favors required reciprocation. The association barred politicians from the PDT, which controlled the local government at the time, from campaigning on the basis of the services that had been provided to the *favela*. In this way, the association sought to strip service provision of its political content. The PDT presented the public works as "gifts" from the party to the *favela*, though not demanding political reciprocation from the community.⁵⁵

While on the surface the provision of goods and services by the government as gifts rather than exchanges may not seem like clientelism, Auyero points out that the conception of clientelism as the exchange of goods for votes "is (pre)constructed far from where the real action lies," not in the act of transaction but "in the enduring webs of relationship that

⁵⁴ Auyero, Javier. *Poor People's Politics: Peronist Survival Networks and the Legacy of Evita* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2001)

⁵⁵ Gay (1994), 101-122.

brokers establish with their clients”.⁵⁶ The brokers in these networks are political operatives of the local ruling party, who act as gatekeepers to the provision of goods and urban services. While the actual act of distribution is not ostensibly reciprocal, brokers form networks through which they can mobilize political support.

Unlike in thick clientelism, thin clientelistic structures require the patron to be in power, and have access to the state resources that can be tapped to build their networks. The mobilization of support is based on the underlying message that if the patron (the PDT in Rio, the Peronist mayor in Cospito) is forced from power, the access to state resources and the problem-solving networks upon which community members rely will dissolve. In other words, rather than perform an explicit exchange of goods for support, brokers simply “make themselves synonymous” with the goods delivered.⁵⁷ However, patrons can make the implied terms of the exchange more explicit, as the PDT did when they established public works projects in two stages, one before and one after the coming election – the message being that the completion of the projects was contingent upon the party’s continued hegemony.⁵⁸

It is clear that although they have radically different structures, both “thick” and “thin” forms constitute clientelism. Both also foster segmented collectivism, reinforcing the idea that the structure of exchange (be it explicit exchange or that implicit in more durable “problem-solving networks”) represent the most effective way to address immediate individual needs.

Municipalities and clientelism

Building on Roberts’ idea of a “segmented democracy” “whose logic is to separate and fragment collective action into discrete, particularistic struggles that can be selectively

⁵⁶ Auyero, 23.

⁵⁷ Auyero, 123.

⁵⁸ Gay (1994), 117-121.

accommodated or neutralized,”⁵⁹ Edward Greaves (2005) explores the role of the municipal government in Chile in generating and maintaining this segmentation. Greaves sees a conscious, two-stage strategy employed by the authoritarian regime and maintained through the transition to democracy: The first stage involves the decentralization of decision-making, shifting responsibility for the provision of many public goods from the central government to the municipality. This diffuses grassroots pressure, as municipalities become the focus of local organizational activity since they are perceived to be the most capable of delivering tangible results. This allows municipal governments to act as buffers between local organizational forces and the central government, and impedes the formation of a broader political discourse or social movement community.⁶⁰

The second stage involves the creation of institutional mechanisms that link grassroots organizations to the municipality, which allows the government to monitor and sometimes direct these organizations, and enables the selective accommodation or neutralization posited by Roberts. Borrowing from Paley, Greaves explains that while they enable co-optation of social organizations, these mechanisms “come wrapped in discourse of ‘civic’ participation”.⁶¹ This discourse allows municipal authorities to “market” the creation of linking mechanisms as democratization of government institutions. An important effect of the creation of these linking mechanisms is that local leaders “become deeply enmeshed in a web-like network of relationships with social workers and officials from municipal offices”.⁶²

⁵⁹ Roberts, 71.

⁶⁰ Edward Greaves, “Panoptic Municipalities, the Spatial Dimensions of the Political, and Passive Revolution in Post-Dictatorship Chile.” *City & Community* 4:2 (2005), 189-215.

⁶¹ Greaves, 192.

⁶² Greaves, 207.

This reveals the potential for the formation of “thin” clientelistic networks that tie community organization to the municipality. The establishment of such networks serves not only to maintain a segmentation of political discourse, but also to create channels through which resources are distributed from municipality to community (in the case of Chile, through municipal project grants). Local leaders, concerned with the acquisition of resources needed to address local needs, effectively become brokers. Their continued ability to access these resources becomes contingent upon the maintenance of the network that links them to the municipality and its officials.

Illegal Actors and Clientelism

It is impossible to talk about contemporary Latin American urban peripheries without taking into account the important and often complex role played by drug trafficking organizations. While the relative levels of resources, organization, and local power held by drug gangs in Rio de Janeiro and Santiago is very different, in both cities their presence and activity have considerable impacts on the local regimes of clientelism. The literature shows two different ways in which traffickers can interact with clientelistic networks, the first being the establishment of a parallel clientelistic structure through which the traffickers act as providers in exchange for the support of the community, and the other penetration into existing clientelistic networks, which allows the traffickers to interact both with the community and state actors.

Like local politicians, but for very different reasons, trafficking gangs rely on the support of the community in which they operate. Although limited state presence in low-income urban communities allows greater latitude for the operation of illegal activities,

traffickers depend of the “protection of anonymity” that the local community provides.⁶³ If traffickers are unable to maintain local support, they run the risk of residents collaborating with the police or rival gangs to have them removed. The traffickers also have at their disposal to a considerable pool of resources, which can be deployed to build and maintain local legitimacy and support. In the 1980s, Gay observed a “Robin Hood” effect, where the local gang in the *favela* of Vidigal maintained support by funding small public works projects and occasionally delivering food and other goods to the poorest families in the community.⁶⁴ This can be said to constitute a type of parallel clientelistic network in which the drug gang assumes a patron/broker role, and uses its resource pool to effectively buy the support of local residents. Since traffickers require a different type of support than local politicians, the two networks can continue to operate in tandem, with each providing goods and services.

In other cases, however, the traffickers integrate themselves into existing clientelistic networks, which allows them to interact with actors other than their local communities, and diversifies their access to resources that can be used to enhance their operations and build local support. In his recent study of three Rio de Janeiro *favelas*, Enrique Desmond Arias (2006) argues that the relationship of the trafficking gangs to the clientelistic structures is too complex to be understood as mere “overlying” networks. Instead, traffickers enter into the pre-existing networks, appropriating the existing local structure which confers legitimacy on the interactions between traffickers and the community, and between traffickers and politicians. In more concrete terms, this means the assumption of control over the neighborhood associations (a position that becomes less desirable to community leaders as the risks of opposing armed traffickers increase considerably). The traffickers need the

⁶³ Gay (1994), 12.

⁶⁴ Gay (1994), 97-98.

neighborhood association because, as low-status actors, they are constrained from interacting with “legitimate” state and political actors. The association offers an ostensibly legitimate intermediary through which relations between traffickers and the state and politicians are possible.

The neighborhood associations thus become the focal points of a much more complex network, which Arias labels “double-barreled clientelism,”⁶⁵ in which associations negotiate with politicians primarily on behalf of traffickers, but also on behalf of the community. The traffickers exchange monopoly access to the *favela* (a guarantee backed up with force of arms) for politicians during campaigns, and state resources that are directed to the community through the neighborhood associations are thus channeled through the traffickers, who have access to the resources first and build local legitimacy through goods and service provision. In this way, the incorporation of traffickers into pre-existing clientelistic networks that link the *favela* to the public power allows them to both increase their legitimacy as patron and broker, but also to interact with politician and state forces (the police, for example) who can aid them in their illicit operations.

Arias further notes that “by providing mediated guarantees to politicians, traffickers make sure that politicians do not build direct personal bonds with residents. Certainly traffickers maintain patronage ties to *favela* residents, but a broader network enables these ties and drains the legitimacy created by clientelism out of the political system.”⁶⁶ This has important implications for the *forms* of clientelism of clientelism possible in the context of a strong trafficker presence (particularly one involving territorial control). Arias’ observation suggests that double-barreled clientelism is incompatible with the structures necessary for

⁶⁵ Arias, 30.

⁶⁶ Arias, 194.

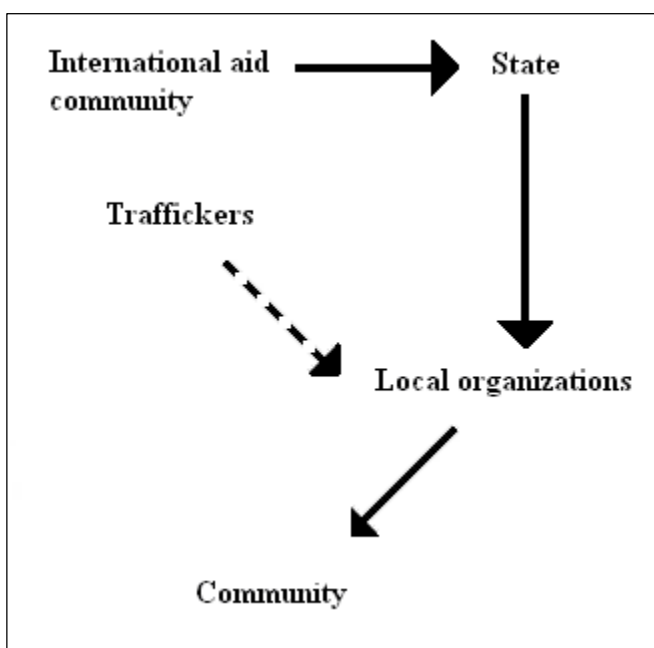
thin clientelism. The result is the same sort of political detachment that Gay observes in thick clientelism – relationships with politicians go only as far as the exchange of some service for the votes of the community, and traffickers assume the role of community benefactors, building ties based on distribution of goods in exchange for local acquiescence rather than the sort of political support pursued by political parties.

Resource Networks in La Legua and Nova Holanda

In the following chapters, I will examine the role of community organizations in the neighborhoods of La Legua in Santiago and Nova Holanda in Rio de Janeiro. I will argue that the resource networks used by organizations in both of these communities constitute examples of segmented collectivism and that in both communities a subset of local collective actors form part of clientelistic networks. However, these networks take on very different forms in the two neighborhoods.

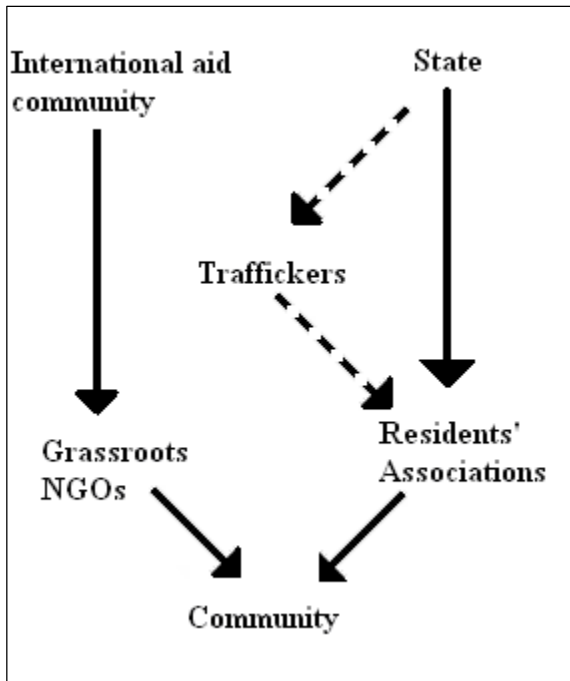
In La Legua I present evidence that many local organizations form part of a “thin” clientelistic network that links the municipality to the local community through local project grants. I will also look at the role of drug traffickers in La Legua which, while actively opposed by some groups, attempts to provide patronage

Figure 1: Resource Networks in Santiago



to others in order to maintain the support or tacit acceptance of the community.

Figure 2: Resource networks in Rio de Janeiro



In Nova Holanda, I argue that the community organizational structure of the neighborhood is characteristic of a post-double-barreled clientelism. By this I mean that the drug traffickers have retreated from existing clientelistic structures, leaving local leaders to try to rebuild a “thick” clientelistic network around the neighborhood association in order to use it to acquire services for the community. At

the same time, trafficker control over the old networks has led to the proliferation of other forms of organization, most importantly grassroots NGOs, with sources of support that allows them to remain outside traditional clientelism.

The following chapters examine the local actors that make up the organizational landscapes of La Legua and Nova Holanda, and situate these new resource networks in the histories of organization of each of these communities. Using this framework of clientelistic networks, I will consider how different forms of clientelism have emerged or declined under different conditions, and the role of resource networks and the actors within them in this process.

III. Popular Organizations and the Politics of Local Resources in Santiago

La Legua: A “marked” *población*

Sitting in his small office in the San Cayetano parish adjacent to the main plaza of La Legua, Padre Gerard Ouisse, a priest of French origin, agreed to talk to me about the local organizations in the *población*. He had been the parish priest in La Legua for six years, and was not only tuned in to local organizational activity, but was also well-versed in the history of the *población*. Before discussing the current state of the neighborhood, he insisted on starting from the beginning: “I think that in order to understand what’s occurring today in La Legua, it’s necessary to understand the history of the *población*”⁶⁷. Indeed, it is impossible to separate La Legua’s present from its past, particularly when one is looking at community’s organizational landscape. La Legua is a *población* with a strong identity forged over the seventy years of its existence, and Padre Ouisse recounts this history in terms of the forces and characteristics which have “marked” the history and identity of the *población*.

“From the beginning, this was a *población* marked on the one hand by poverty, but also by its solidarity”.⁶⁸ La Legua was founded in three phases, which now constitute the three sectors of the neighborhood: La Legua Vieja, La La Legua Nueva, and La Legua de Emergencia. The first sector, La Legua Vieja, was founded in the 1930s by workers who migrated to Santiago from the north, where the declining nitrate industry left thousands unemployed. The government provided the workers with plots of land one league from the center of the city (the name *La Legua*, meaning “the league,” refers to its location). Access to land on the fringes of the city, however, did not mean access to urban services, and the residents of the nascent *población*

⁶⁷ Interview: Padre Gerard Ouisse, La Legua, July 25, 2008.

⁶⁸ Padre Ouisse, July 25, 2008.

organized to secure services such as water, electricity, and paved roads both through their own construction projects and by lobbying the government to provide them.⁶⁹

The sector of La Legua Nueva (“New La Legua”) was founded in 1947, during a period of increasing city-wide pressure on the government to take action to reduce Santiago’s grave housing deficit.⁷⁰ A group of poor families, some from shantytowns and others from overcrowded inner-city *conventillos*, decided to illegally seize land in Zañartu, in the eastern part of the city. With the support of the Mayor of Santiago, a Communist party member, the squatters were relocated and given formal plots adjacent to La Legua Vieja. The previous organization of the new residents and political militancy of both Communists and Christian democrats among them facilitated the acquisition of urban services for the new sector, and gave new organizational life to La Legua.⁷¹

The third sector of the *población* was built in the early 1950s as transitional housing to alleviate the increasing housing deficit. It was labeled “La Legua, emergency sector” because it was intended to address the social emergency posed by the severe lack of low-income housing in Santiago. Families from the poorest socioeconomic sectors of the city were relocated to La Legua de Emergencia, and they lacked the organization that characterized the older parts of the *población*.⁷² Furthermore, the housing that was intended to be transitional became permanent as the Chilean government was repeatedly unsuccessful in resolving the city’s housing crisis. La Legua de Emergencia is still easily identifiable by its tiny “matchbox” houses, compared to the larger, sturdier, and better-serviced houses of the other sectors of the *población*.

⁶⁹ Garcés, Mario and Sebastián Leiva. *El Golpe en La Legua: Los caminos de la historia y la memoria* (Santiago, LOM Ediciones, 2005), 31-32.

⁷⁰ A complete quantitative and qualitative analysis of the housing crisis and the *pobladores* from the mid-20th century through 1970 can be found in Mario Garcés’s book, *Tomando su sitio: El movimiento de pobladores de Santiago, 1957-1970* (Santiago, LOM Ediciones, 2002).

⁷¹ Several personal accounts of the foundation and early years of each sector of the La Legua can be found in: *Lo que se teje en La Legua: historia, poesía y canciones de su gente* (Santiago: ECO-CEDAL, 1999).

⁷² Garcés (2005), 32.

The solidarity that “marked” La Legua in its early years manifested itself in the organization of residents to acquire services and improve the neighborhood. The *población* also had several cultural and athletic clubs, and many residents were active in leftist political parties. In the early 1970s, this meant strong local participation in the revolutionary project of Allende’s Popular Unity government. The high level of activity of the local Communist party and in workers organizations in the nearby textile factories in this period would make La Legua a target of the repressive apparatus of the military regime following the coup of 1973.⁷³

“The history of La Legua is also a history of repression,” continued Padre Ouisse, “which was felt particularly strongly here during the military dictatorship. There were many people who were disappeared and others who were detained and tortured”.⁷⁴ In the first few days following the military coup there were a series of armed confrontations in and around La Legua between leftist militants and police and military forces, resulting in the death and detention of many local workers and party activists. In the years that followed, the *población* would continue to be a target of repression, subject to raids and detentions en masse of local residents, as well as the execution of several people – justified by the state and the press with the labeling of the victims as either “terrorists” or “delinquents.”

Continuous and extreme repression in La Legua throughout the 1970s meant that the reconstruction of social and political networks would be slower than in other *poblaciones* of Santiago.⁷⁵ However, the problems of unemployment and hunger led to the establishment of common kitchens (*comedores*), and San Cayetano Parish opened its doors to those needing assistance - including leftist militants escaping repression - only a few months after the coup. Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, participation in social organizations under the aegis of the

⁷³ See Garcés, 2005.

⁷⁴ Padre Ouisse, July 25, 2008.

⁷⁵ Bruey, Ch. 5, 33-34.

church increased, and political militants began to enter these organizations. These increasingly radicalized social organizations, as well as autonomous groups of Communist Party members, became platforms for “lightning protests” against the regime, and later for the coordination within the *población* for participation in the national protests from 1983 to 1985.⁷⁶ Such organization did not go unnoticed by the regime, but despite periods of repression of social and political organization, particularly following the national protests, these groups continued to be active both as subsistence and resistance groups through the late 1980s.

“And, since about 1987, the *población* has been marked by the presence of drugs - first *pasta base* (a cheap cocaine derivative), and later cocaine and others. Today the *población* continues to be marked by the drug problem; consumption, yes, but also the sale, the presence of drug traffickers. They fight one another, day and night, with guns. They fight, fight, fight...gunbattles, and this has led to the stigmatization of our *población*. People everywhere speak very poorly of La Legua. People are afraid to come here, they’re afraid to enter the *población*. It’s like a ghetto, as if there were a wall of disdain, of wealth and power. Indifference and discrimination form this wall that surrounds the *población*.”⁷⁷ Indeed, today La Legua is synonymous in the press with drugs, crime and violence, more so than with poverty and the social ills that plague this and many other *poblaciones*. The most common portrayals of the *población* appear in newspaper reports of murders, or “true crime” TV shows depicting drug raids in the neighborhood. Images of poverty, struggle, repression and resistance have been supplanted by those of crime and violence.

It is in the context of this history, a history of poverty, organization, repression and stigmatization that the current organizational landscape of La Legua has to be understood. All of

⁷⁶ Bruey, Ch.4, 42-50; Ch5, 37-40).

⁷⁷ Padre Ouisse, July 25, 2008.

these forces that have “marked” the *población* since its inception continue to impact the community, whether it be the more concrete effects of crime and stigmatization, or the demobilization and organizational deficit inherited from the era of the dictatorship.

Current organizational landscape

Nearly two decades after the transition to democracy, the organizational landscape of La Legua has certainly acquired new life, although it is considerably different from earlier forms of political organization that were prevalent prior to the military coup, and from the political and survival networks of the dictatorship period. In the first years following the democratic transition, organizational activity in the *población* was sparse and fragmented. As Luz Bustos, director of the *Red de organizaciones sociales de La Legua* (“Network of social organization of La Legua,” referred to as “La Red”), explained: “when La Red first formed [16 years ago], we were all heads of household, we were workers, we were involved in organizations in school, or we were union members; we didn’t have community organizations. But people were open to participation, and to forming groups.”⁷⁸ Indeed, today organizational life in La Legua includes social and athletic clubs, cultural groups, small community centers, senior citizens’ groups, political organizations, and religious groups. However, to some extent the demobilization and fragmentation of the transition period has persisted, as these organizations bring together relatively small groups of people, and engage in narrowly defined activities.

In order to address the issue of fragmentation, some local leaders established “networks” and “coordinators” of organizations, like La Red, which allowed members of the smaller groups to come together in order to address overarching problems facing the community – most importantly the problem of the consumption and trafficking of drugs. However, despite the success of some of these efforts, the organizational landscape of the *población* continues to be

⁷⁸ Interview: Luz Bustos, La Legua, July 12, 2008.

divided, both by this fragmentation and by political divisions. The organizations that I encountered in La Legua fell predominantly into two camps, one consisting of groups tied to Luz and La Red (in turn connected to the political parties of the ruling Concertación coalition), and the other with ties to the Communist Party. Between these two groups there is little dialogue, and several people referred to hostile and even violent encounters between members of the two segments. In order to explore the nature of this division I must first introduce the organizations that I examine in my study, and highlight the activities and affiliations that define them.

La Red de Organizaciones Sociales de La Legua

La Red was formed in 1993, and initially included 22 member organizations. It was initially created to work on issues of drug prevention and rehabilitation, and was funded by CONACE, the drug control office of the Ministry of the Interior. When the funding ended, several of La Red's constituent organizations left, but it continued to operate, applying for government funds, and also being financed through its collaboration with ECO, an NGO which trains community leaders, sets up community radio and television programs, and conducts "popular historical" research in several *poblaciones* in Santiago. Today, there are 14 organizations attached to La Red, and it continues to be funded by project grants from national government programs and the municipality, primarily money designated for the drug prevention programs.⁷⁹

Centro Cultural el ARCA

One of the current member groups of La Red is the *Centro Cultural el ARCA* ("El ARCA Cultural Center"), formed in 2006 after the dissolution of an older cultural organization. It began with a website, where contributors posted stories and articles. Today, it publishes a local magazine with project grants from a national book fund and from the National Council of

⁷⁹ Luz Bustos, July 12, 2008.

Culture and Arts. It also includes a “writer’s circle” for local writers, which they support with personal fundraising and book sales. Ely, the director of el ARCA, explains that the “fundamental objective is to change the way people view La Legua, to distribute our own version of the story so that people know that it’s not just narcos here.” She notes that her connection to ECO through La Red has been helpful; both in terms of funding for popular communications projects and in helping them distribute material and make contacts outside of La Legua.⁸⁰

Centro de Desarrollo Comunitario

Another constituent group of La Red is the *Centro de Desarrollo Comunitario* (“Community Development Center,” or CDC), a small youth and community center. They are one of the few organizations with their own building, which many other groups attached to La Red use for meetings and events. The center has computers that local kids can use, and offers arts and music classes. Aside from their own fundraising, the CDC applies for municipal project grants to finance its activities. Christian, the center’s director, is also actively involved in politics and ran for a municipal council seat in the recent elections as a Christian Democrat.⁸¹

The Consejo de Salud and Senior Citizens’ Center

Two other groups in La Red are the Consejo de Salud (Health Council) and Centro de Adultos Mayores (Senior Citizens’ Center) both run by the same woman, Eliana, a local organizer. The Senior Citizens’ Center was formed about 12 years ago as a social group, and was funded by the national Social and Solidarity Investment Fund (FOSIS). Since the national project funding ran out, they have applied for municipal project grants, which continue to finance their activities. The Health Council was formed in 1998, and is primarily dedicated to advising

⁸⁰ Interview: Elizabeth Espinoza, La Legua, July 12, 2008.

⁸¹ Interviews: Christian Garrido, La Legua July 26, 2008; Elizabeth Espinoza, July 12, 2008.

residents of the *población* on health issues, and directing people to the appropriate municipal health services and offices. Its activities are also financed by municipal project grants.⁸²

Each of these organizations has a relatively narrow focus, whether it be health, writing, youth activities, or socializing. La Red offers a platform for these disparate groups to address broader issues. While it was started with national anti-drug program funds, they have also organized around issues like healthcare and violence. It is important to note that each of these groups is funded by either national programs (CONACE, FOSIS, and cultural funds) or by project grants from the municipality. This is significant because, as Luz noted, when government funding runs out organizations can cease to function. But, access to and use of government funds is also one of the central points of contention that has produced the divide between sectors of La Legua's organizations. Finally, it is worth noting that while not all of the group organizers are party militants, Luz is a longtime militant of the *Partido por la Democracia* (PPD), one of the main parties of the ruling Concertación, which also controls the local Municipality of San Joaquín. Luz assured me that the organizations had no political affiliations: "everyone has their party, but we don't mix the two." However, I will explore later how party affiliation and connection to the municipal government is central to understanding the divide in the community.

The Communist party and local organizations

While the groups associated with the extra-parliamentary left don't have a central organization analogous to La Red, they are connected to each other through both personal and political ties. Although the segment of organizations in La Legua that is affiliated with the Communist party includes several more groups, here I focus on two: Legua York and the Brigada Pedro Rojas.

⁸² Interview: Eliana, La Legua, July 19, 2008.

Legua York

Legua York is a political rap group that has attained a degree of national fame in Chile, although Gustavo “Lulo” Arias, the group’s leader and front man, explains that “we never intended for it to be a musical-artistic project, we weren’t trying to make money or become famous.” Legua York began as a youth cultural group in 1997, after frustrated attempts to participate in other organizations, such as La Red. “We were young, 13 or 14, and they acted like they couldn’t hear us. We would propose ideas but in the end it was theirs that was imposed,” explains Lulo, “so we went to paint graffiti, to rap on the corner. That’s where Legua York started, from a need to not feel like we were being ignored.” Lulo had been a Communist party militant for two years (although he described himself as a “lifelong sympathizer” of the party), and was running for municipal council. The Communist party, however, with limited financial resources, does not fund the group. Legua York’s activities are financed in part through their own activities and record sales, and they also apply for municipal project grants.⁸³

La Brigada Pedro Rojas

Closely tied to Legua York is another artistic group, the Brigada Pedro Rojas (Pedro Rojas Brigade), named for a young resident of La Legua who was killed by police during the dictatorship. The Brigada is an artistic group that paints graffiti murals throughout La Legua and in other neighborhoods in the municipality. It was formed in 2003, growing out of a propaganda project of the Juventud Comunista (Young Communists, JJCC) of the municipality of San Joaquín. Although it originated from a JJCC project, Victor, who is both the Brigada’s director and the head of propaganda for the local Communist Party, insisted that “we’re trying to open up. We let anyone who’s interested in painting join.” He adds: “I’m the only one who’s a party militant, but all of the boys are leftist. We paint with red and black.” Indeed, throughout the

⁸³ Interview: Gustavo “Lulo” Arias, La Legua, July 22, 2008.

población there are graffiti murals with clear communist symbols, many of which were painted by the Brigada. The group is financed entirely by their own fundraising, but when they are contracted by the Communist party to paint in some area of the municipality, the party pays for their materials.⁸⁴

Legua York and the Pedro Rojas Brigade are not the only local organizations in La Legua with Communist party affiliation. Both Victor and Lulo made reference to several other groups that form part of their network. The largest of these was the Centro Cultural La Garrapata, a cultural group which runs a number of culture programs and also manages a local radio station that was set up in collaboration with ECO. While I couldn't get more detailed information about more organizations in this group, it is important to note that the two groups that I describe in detail are part of a broader local organizational network.

The most important factor that distinguishes the organizations affiliated with the Communist party from those of La Red is that they are more explicitly politically oriented. These groups and other organizations to which they are connected are not exclusively political; rather they are cultural and social organizations with political content and affiliation. In contrast to Luz's denial of any role of politics in local organizations, both Lulo and Victor made clear their identification with the political project of the Communist Party. Also significant is that these groups have few alternative sources of funding. Although Legua York's limited commercial success has generated some resources, the only other alternative to independent fundraising (for both these groups and for La Red) is applying for municipal project grants.

⁸⁴ Interview: Victor Aguilera, La Legua, July 22, 2008.

Table 1: The organizational divide in La Legua

Organizations of La Red de Organizaciones Sociales		Organizations of Communist party affiliation	
La Red	Coordination of constituent groups, drug prevention programs	Legua York	Music and culture organization and performing and recording political rap group
EI ARCA Cultural Center	Arts and culture programs, writers' circle, publication of local magazine		
Consejo de Salud	Dissemination of health information, direction of residents to health services	Pedro Rojas Brigade	Graffiti art group, formed from propaganda arm of Young Communists
Center for Community Development	Community center with youth-oriented culture and education programs	La Garrapata Cultural Group	Cultural and community media group, runs a local radio station
Senior Citizens' Center	Social and discussion group for Senior Citizens		

Political divisions and resource access

While the political division between groups of community organizations in La Legua is clear, the discourse surrounding this division is revealing of the relationship between some local organizations and the government, particularly the municipality, and the way other groups perceive that relationship. It is worth noting that none of the directors associated with La Red made reference to groups or individuals linked to the local Communist Party, but Lulo and Victor were explicit in their criticism of the organizations with ties to the municipality. An examination of the discourse of various local actors with regard to the division is illuminating.

The first perspective I would like to present is that of Myriam Olgún, a historian at the nongovernmental organization ECO, who has been working on projects in La Legua since the mid-1990s. ECO has worked with organizations from both sides of this organizational divide over the last decade on popular history projects, training local organizers, and setting up community radio and television programs. While at the moment they were working with La Red on multiple programs, this was conjunctural, rather than reflective of the NGOs political affinity. In fact, they have helped to establish several cultural organizations affiliated with the Communist

party in past years (nonetheless, their current association with La Red provoked strong condemnation of the NGO from Lulo). Myriam offered the following explanation of the division:

Politically, the organizations in the community are divided between supporters of the Concertación and those of the extra-parliamentary left...Luz Bustos has long been a militant of the PPD. She has links with the municipality of San Joaquín, which is controlled by the Concertación. La Red works with drug prevention, and also receives funds from CONACE, an initiative of the Interior Ministry. This creates conflict. It provokes opposition from organizations of those who identify with the extra-parliamentary left. They consider it a sort of betrayal to work with the government, with government funds, even for drug prevention.

There are several organizations that are currently connected to La Red de Organizaciones Sociales, that are connected to the ruling party...This has created many problems. On the one hand, if one looks at from the point of view of these organizations, it has meant good possibilities in terms of being able to carry out their projects...to be able to have a voice with regard to the issues of drug trafficking. On the other hand, it has caused problems, distancing, and even aggression on the part of groups who are opposed to the ruling party.⁸⁵

Myriam's explanation includes an acknowledgement of differential access to state resources based on connection to the municipality, and thus, to the Concertación. This seems to run quite counter to the idea of project grants (also called "contestable funds"), to which any organization, regardless of political orientation or affiliation, should have equal access. Part of the reason may be practical: As Ely, the director of el ARCA explained to me, "You have to apply, submit all the documents about the organization, the members, leadership. Then after that comes the process of things that are missing; they say 'you need this paper, or the other that you

⁸⁵ Interview: Myriam Olgún, Ñuñoa, July 9, 2008.

don't have.' It's not even that the project is bad, just that some document is missing".⁸⁶ Clearly, close ties to the municipality can facilitate the navigation of the bureaucratic details. However, Greaves explains that buried in this bureaucratic navigation is the process of creating "informal alliances and networks of municipal officials and grassroots leaders that act as a bulwark against activists who seek to challenge the status quo."⁸⁷

To explore this idea further, I examine the perspective offered by Paola Canto, who is head of the Social Development Department in the Municipality of San Joaquín. In charge of overseeing the distribution of municipal project grants and other aspects of municipal-grassroots relations, Ms. Canto is precisely the kind of municipal official to which Greaves refers.

This division does exist...ideologically and politically there are groups who are against working with government institutions, and obviously we can't force them to work with us. We don't intervene in the internal disputes caused by this division, as that would be to engage in clientelism, to protect 'our own' as if they were children. The truth is that they opt to recognize that the support of the state is a right that they can demand, and from which they can benefit. On the other hand, the municipality asks for nothing 'in return' for its support of the activities of these organizations...our patronage does not imply that they should follow orders from the municipality, or that they should censor what they want to say."⁸⁸

Paola, too, attributes differential access to municipal resources to the rejection by certain sectors (those of the extra-parliamentary left) of working with the government or using government funds. This justification stands in contrast, however, to the explanations offered by Victor and Lulo about the use of municipal funds, as I will discuss later. What is most interesting is her denial of "engaging in clientelism," and her explicit refutation of the idea that anything is

⁸⁶ Elizabeth Espinoza, July 12, 2008.

⁸⁷ Greaves, 206.

⁸⁸ Paola Canto, e-mail message to author, July 24, 2008.

expected in return for the financial support of the municipality. Auyero's observation that the "real action" of clientelism lies not in the act of distribution, but rather in the "enduring webs of relationships that brokers establish with their clients,"⁸⁹ is particularly pertinent here. While any expectation of reciprocation is explicitly denied, the informal networks formed between local leaders and municipal officials are what facilitate the access of the former to the resources controlled by the latter. The consolidation of such networks, incentivizes political support for the current municipal government, as a change in political leadership would mean a reshuffling of the municipal bureaucracy, dissolving the ties through which state resources are more easily accessed.

A quite contrasting explanation of the division comes from both Victor and Lulo, those belonging to the groups who are allegedly "ideologically and politically" against working with government institutions. Although Victor attributes some of the division to government intervention in La Legua, his primary criticism is of the actions of the groups connected to La Red, not of their solicitation of municipal resources.

The Brigada has worked very little with those organizations [connected to La Red]. We recognized that government intervention was going to have that effect. We saw that intervention arrived with the intention of dividing and wearing down social mobilization in the *población*. Now there are people who have been doing work in the *población* for a long time, and they still use the name of La Red, and they are doing absolutely nothing in the *población*. There are some organizations that haven't done this. For example, Furia Leguina that organizes their carnival, and they've formed networks with other groups that haven't become 'ghost organizations,' like the boys over at la Garrapata and at Legua York. We saw that some organizations were disappearing, some were becoming ghost organizations that

⁸⁹ Auyero, 23.

aren't doing anything; lucky for them, because they pocket some cash. We weren't working with those organizations at that point. We're more involved in political issues, and not the social organizations where that was happening. But we observed it from the outside, we saw that when intervention came from the Ministry of the Interior [referring to CONACE] a lot of these organizations started dividing, falling apart. It's a shame because that produces a reversal in the advances of the forces of our *población*.”⁹⁰

When asked about opposition to working with government institutions and using funds from the municipality, Lulo made clear that it had little to do with the division in the community. The issue was never one of collaborating with “institutionality,” but, like Victor, he attacks the way those organizations utilize the fruits of that collaboration.

The problem is not using money from the government, but where that money goes. There are people who just apply for grants from the government, who live on subsidies that they receive for being in favor of the ideas of the government and the state. We've also applied for those projects, but we apply with a different logic. We call it ‘Robin Hood logic,’ where we recover the resources that belong to all of us, through the municipal project grants, and we spend it on something that we make available to everyone. We aren't against people applying for project grants, what we are against are the people who apply for a project, and then pocket the money shamelessly. They don't even organize a ‘ghost event’ or anything. There are many of these people in all communities, and here in La Legua there are several, disguised as ‘La Red’, as cultural centers called ‘el ARCA,’ just to take all that money who knows where, I guess just for el ARCA itself.”⁹¹

Victor's and Lulo's explanations of the divisions in the *población* share two important elements. The first is the discourse of “theft” and the use of “ghost organizations” or “ghost events” to pocket state resources. While I couldn't determine the veracity of the accusations, I

⁹⁰ Victor Aguilera, July 22, 2008.

⁹¹ Gustavo “Lulo” Arias, July 22, 2008.

believe that Lulo's explanation of "Robin Hood logic" is helpful in understanding this discourse. Specifically citing the case of el ARCA, he suggests that they simply take municipal funds and use it for "el ARCA itself." While this seems to be an appropriate use of municipal funds - for a cultural project, even if it only involves a small group of people - Lulo suggests that the way these funds should be used is for something that is open to the entire community, rather than the small membership of a group. While theft in the strict sense may not be occurring, the use of state funds for the benefit of small groups of people, particularly when coupled with (at least the perception of) preferential access to funds by these groups, is clearly a source of friction.

The second notable theme is that their criticism has to do less with the idea of the use of government funds as "betrayal," as Myriam suggested, or an outright rejection of working with the municipal government. Although Victor suggests that state intervention was intended to "divide and wear down" social organization in the community, he also distinguishes between "good" and "bad" organizations – those that use municipal resources to serve the community and those that simply steal them. The "good organizations" that he cites (Furia Leguina, Legua York, and la Garrapata cultural center) are all part of the same sector, with ties to the extra-parliamentary left.

That organizations from this political segment of the *población* may not, in fact, reject outright the idea of working with government institutions casts some doubt on the justification offered by both Myriam and Paola for the differential access to municipal resources. While I am hesitant to draw conclusions about the relationship between organizations of the Communist party and the municipal government, it is apparent that the informal networks formed between groups aligned with the ruling Concertación and municipal workers indeed facilitate the access of these groups to state funds. As Greaves suggests, the groups that form these networks serve "as a

bulwark against activists who seek to challenge the status quo,” in this case organizations with ties to the Communist party – at least those who do not reject working with institutionality.

...

When I was leaving Luz’s house on a rainy Saturday afternoon, she accompanied me to the bus stop. “I have to go to the municipality anyway,” she explained. “When it rains I work distributing tarps and other supplies in La Legua de Emergencia.” She hadn’t mentioned this job earlier, even though we had talked about the municipality and applying for resources for La Red and its constituent groups. However, it became clear that her connection to the municipal government went beyond periodic solicitation of financial support through project grants.

In his own study of similar organizations, Greaves observes that in many cases “the political location of the *dirigente* [community leader] has become somewhat obscured and distorted,” and that many of these grassroots leaders “had come to view their organizations as extensions of the municipal government in their communities.”⁹² With Luz, who single-handedly constitutes the directorate of La Red, this blurring is apparent. Her connections to the municipality are strong and multi-faceted, and in the community it is not clear whether, in a given activity, she represents an independent organization or part of the municipal apparatus. For multiple reasons, she has a stake in the continued hegemony of the Concertación in San Joaquín, and this shapes both the opportunities afforded to organizations associated with La Red, and also the meaning of the support that these groups receive from the municipal government.

Violence, traffickers, and parallel clientelism

It would be impossible to write a study of local organizations in almost any *población* in Santiago without addressing the issue of drug traffickers. As Myriam observed: “narco-

⁹² Greaves, 209.

traffickers have become one of the strongest organizations in the territory [of La Legua].”⁹³

Padre Ouisse also cited drug consumption, trafficking, and the violence associated with it as one of the things that has most “marked” the *población* and the lives of its residents in recent years. I have already mentioned a couple of ways in which the presence of drug trafficking has indirectly affected La Legua – first in that it has produced the stigmatization of *población* from outside, forming the “wall” to which Padre Ouisse made reference; and second because drug prevention and rehabilitation programs have been an important source of funds for local organizations (the secondary effects of which I have made apparent). Here I would like to explore two more aspects of the relationship between drug traffickers and community organizations in La Legua – opposition to traffickers by some organizations, and attempts by traffickers to co-opt local support.

Marches for Peace and the “protection of anonymity”

Padre Ouisse: “In February of 2006, there were gun battles [*balaceras*] everyday, especially at about four in the afternoon; the time when kids normally get out of school. It was fifteen days from the start of the school year. We thought: what can we do?”⁹⁴

...

Luz: “At that time, people couldn’t even walk through the *población*. People couldn’t go out to buy bread because there was gunfire in broad daylight, or they assaulted you...the streets were completely unsafe.”⁹⁵

...

⁹³ Myrian Olguín, July 9, 2008.

⁹⁴ Padre Ouisse, July 25, 2008.

⁹⁵ Luz Bustos, July 12, 2008.

Faced with increasing drug-related violence in the streets of the *población*, several local organization leaders and people from San Cayetano church met in the parish, and they planned a “march for peace.” “We walked through the streets in peace, with white flags. We declared that we want peace, tranquility, no more gunfights. We don’t want the police entering people’s houses. We want the kids to be able to go to school, women to be able to go out and by bread, without the risk of being shot.”⁹⁶

“There were about 80 of us, some neighbors, people from the church and people from social organizations. We marched through the streets, scared to death. We had our banners demanding peace, an end to the gunfights. Then something interesting happened: when we passed a group of police [*carabineros*], I heard people in the march insulting them.”⁹⁷

A smaller group held a second march a few days later, when the violence resumed, and a few weeks afterward elements of the protest for peace were included in the annual celebration of the Catholic Holy Week. According to Luz, they have held several more marches over the past few years, and the results have been positive.

“Now things are calmer. There has been government intervention, organizations have done a lot to get out in the street. We did receive some death threats over the internet, but I think in the end they understood, because we’re all neighbors and we all know each other. They realized: ‘you know what, our neighbor is right; people need safety, tranquility.’ We don’t talk to the traffickers directly...It’s dangerous to confront them alone. We know who they are, we’re all neighbors, but we act as organizations or through the parish, and we get out on the streets and say ‘we don’t want this.’”⁹⁸

⁹⁶ Luz Bustos, July 12, 2008.

⁹⁷ Padre Ouisse, July 25, 2008.

⁹⁸ Luz Bustos, July 12, 2008.

These descriptions of the origins and effect of the marches for peace reveal an important aspect of the relationship between the community and drug traffickers. First, that violence (particularly gun violence) is a regular part of the landscape of La Legua. The gunfights described by both Luz and Padre Ouisse certainly occurred before the escalation that preceded the first march for peace, and they continue to occur today. Only when the violence reached certain limits - jeopardizing the safety of children and preventing people from even going out to buy bread - did the community organize to try to curb it. The “positive results” that Luz observed, achieved by the marches for peace, suggest some sort of response on the part of the traffickers to this community pressure. This makes sense when you consider that, as Luz observes, everyone in the neighborhood knows everyone else, and they know who is involved in the drug trade. It is clear that the traffickers depend on what Robert Gay calls “the protection of anonymity.”⁹⁹ The *población*, explains Lulo, “is like a small town in the middle of a metropolis.”¹⁰⁰ Everyone in La Legua knows who everyone else is and what everyone does, yet nobody denounces those involved in drug trafficking to the police. When the violence reaches extremes intolerable to the community, and they are confronted by the community overall, the traffickers attempt to curb the violence. In order to maintain this protection traffickers have to respond, to some extent, to the demands of the community.

Another part of the explanation of this “protection of anonymity” has to do with the perceptions of the role of the police in the *población*. Both Padre Ouisse’s story of protestors insulting the police, and Luz’s assertion that “we don’t want the police entering people’s houses” reveal negative perceptions of police among La Legua’s residents. This is, in part, related to the repression that “marked” the *población*, both during the dictatorship (when the *carabineros* were

⁹⁹ Gay (1994), 12.

¹⁰⁰ Gustavo “Lulo” Arias, July 22, 2008.

the most visible face of state repression in the *poblaciones*), and today. Lulo likened police activity in the *población* to “Plan Colombia”, the US support for the drug war in Colombia. “It’s a justification for repression. There are always more police here, and at night you have to carry your ID.”¹⁰¹ The perception of police as either repressive or excessive in their methods certainly contributes to the protection afforded to traffickers in La Legua.

However, a negative perception of the police is not the only reason for the “protection of anonymity.” Local leaders in the *población* consider trafficking to be symptomatic of the larger problems of the *población*, particularly that of persistent poverty and the lack of access to state social support. Luz noted that “in one day, a trafficker earns as much as an average person makes in a month.” Lulo attributes it to the neoliberal structure of opportunities: “this is how you’re going to have money. You can become millionaires, but go back to your poor neighborhoods and mess around there [*bájense a huevear*].”¹⁰² Padre Ouisse asked me: “If a father with a sick child has no money to buy medicine, and a trafficker comes to him and offers him a lot of money to store drugs or weapons in his home, would you judge him for doing it?”¹⁰³ The perception that traffickers are also victims of broader structural problems that affect the entire *población* makes community members more tolerant of their presence. They do not, as Padre Ouisse suggested, judge them, and by the same token they do not turn them in to the police. This perception is undoubtedly another source of the protection of anonymity. But, as the marches for peace demonstrate, that protection has limits.

Illicit Resources and Parallel Clientelism

Beyond these passive reasons for the protection of anonymity afforded to drug traffickers in the *población*, there have also been some active efforts on the part of traffickers to win support

¹⁰¹ Gustavo “Lulo” Arias, July 22, 2008.

¹⁰² Gustavo “Lulo” Arias, July 22, 2008.

¹⁰³ Padre Ouisse, July 25, 2008.

in the community. On multiple occasions, traffickers have provided (or attempted to provide) resources to community organizations and individuals. Myriam explained to me that it was well known in the community that the traffickers had helped to finance the annual Carnival celebration the previous year. Padre Ouisse also told me that on several occasions the traffickers had attempted to give money to the parish: “We have never, as a church – although there were several years in which they tried to buy us – we have never accepted money from narco-traffickers. Sometimes, we even gave back money when we learned that it had come from them.” He added to that a story about a trafficker offering to buy him a new bicycle when his was stolen.¹⁰⁴

These examples of traffickers funneling resources into local organizations or attempting to provide personalized problem-solving (as in the case of Padre Ouisse’s bicycle), using their considerable pool of illicit resources, are important in understanding the relationship between the community and the drug traffickers. This kind of support is what Robert Gay describes as “playing the occasional role of Robin Hood,” where the traffickers use their wealth to effectively “buy” the tacit support of the community.¹⁰⁵ The space for such exchanges are created by the lack of alternative resources to support grassroots organizations. As I have outlined above, the municipal authority has a near-monopoly on funds that are available to local groups, and even those resources are limited. In order to survive or pursue its agenda, an organization may find it necessary to seek support from alternative sources, even if they are illicit.

I argue that this, in fact, constitutes a network of clientelism parallel to that which links the municipality to many community organizations in La Legua. Like other clientelist networks, the traffickers exchange the resources to which they have access for support. It is clearly not the

¹⁰⁴ Padre Ouisse, July 25, 2008.

¹⁰⁵ Gay (1994), 12.

same type of support that is provided by “traditional” clientelist networks (ie. Political support), rather it is a support that bolsters the traffickers’ “protection of anonymity.” In fact it is this differentiation of types of support that allows these two clientelist networks to operate in parallel. Where the two clientele populations overlap, individuals can provide political support to candidates for municipal office and “protection” support to the traffickers.

IV. Grassroots NGOs and Post-Clientelist Networks in Rio de Janeiro

Nova Holanda is a *favela* in the industrial North Zone of Rio de Janeiro. It is part of a larger complex of 16 *favelas*, called Complexo da Maré, which, with a combined population of more than 130,000 constitutes the second largest agglomeration of *favelas* in the city of Rio de Janeiro.¹⁰⁶ Of the many communities that make up the Complexo da Maré, Nova Holanda's history is unique. Unlike many *favelas*, which were built by squatters on unused public and private land, Nova Holanda was established by the government as a provisional housing center for residents who were removed from other *favelas*. The *favela* was planned and built in 1962 by the state government of Carlos Lacerda (1961-1965), a notoriously anti-*favela* governor. It was intended to temporarily house people who had been displaced by the eradication of the *favelas* of Praia do Pinto, Esqueleto, Morro da Formiga and Morro de Querosene, which were destroyed as part of a government program to remove the poor from wealthy areas of the South Zone and free up squatter-occupied land for real estate development.¹⁰⁷ Although such programs had existed for many years, only during the Lacerda government and later under the military dictatorship (1964-1985) was there sufficient political will to implement them. The state began to construct relocation settlements (*conjuntos habitacionais*) in distant suburbs to the west and north of the city, and to systematically evict residents and demolish *favelas*.

It was in this context that Nova Holanda was born as a Provisional Housing Center (*Centro de Habitação Provisória*, CHP), from which residents expected to be moved to the settlements of Cidade de Deus and Vila Kennedy, where additional housing was being constructed to accommodate residents of eradicated *favelas*. Because of its status as

¹⁰⁶ This data comes from the Censo Maré project, done in 2000 by the Centro de Estudos e Ações Solidárias da Maré. It can be accessed online at <http://www.ceasm.org.br>.

¹⁰⁷ Jacques, Paola Berenstein, "Cartografias da Maré." In Drauzio Varella, Ivaldo Bertazzo and Paola Berenstein Jacques, *Maré: Vida na Favela* (Rio de Janeiro: Casa da Palvavra, 2002), 41.

“provisional,” initially the houses given to residents were simple wood structures and the community had minimal urban services. Furthermore, residents were prohibited from making improvements to their homes in order to prevent them from becoming firmly established in the area from which they were eventually to be removed. Assisting in this effort was the Fundação Leão XIII, an organization created by the Catholic Church in 1946 and supported by the state beginning in 1947, to provide material and moral assistance to *favela* residents in the city. In 1963 it became part of Guanabara State’s Department of Social Service (*Secretaria de Serviço Social*).¹⁰⁸ Its role in *favelas* and removal communities mixed material aid with social control, with the intention of demobilizing residents politically, and preventing the spread of leftist ideologies in neighborhoods that were considered to be breeding grounds for communism.¹⁰⁹ In Nova Holanda the Fundação was responsible for maintaining order and ensuring that residents made no modification to the housing center. It also dominated organizational life in the neighborhood, creating a residents’ association in the 1960s, which it carefully controlled until the 1980s.

Although Nova Holanda was maintained as a transitional housing project for two decades, it ultimately became a permanent settlement as the government proved unable to accommodate all of the *favela* residents that it had displaced in the distant resettlement communities. In the early 1980s the government began to construct new housing settlements in other parts of Maré, signaling to residents that their “provisional” stay had become permanent. Residents began to make improvements to their houses and build concrete structures to replace the original wooden homes. In this way the regular, if provisional, settlement became

¹⁰⁸ Pandolfi and Grynzspan, 151.

¹⁰⁹ Pino, 138.

“favelized.”¹¹⁰ In the same period, the opening of the military regime and the loosening of social control in Nova Holanda allowed new organizational life to emerge. While the resident’s association had previously been controlled the Fundação Leão XIII, some residents began to mobilize to oppose its local hegemony, and in 1984 the first “free association” was formed, replacing the residents association of the Fundação.¹¹¹

The Residents’ Association of Nova Holanda: Formation, “conquests,” and delegitimization

As in many *favelas* in Rio de Janeiro, the residents’ association of Nova Holanda has been a key force in the organizational life of the community. Although the combination of state social control and the demobilization caused by the removal of *favelas* to Nova Holanda, residents created a vital organization in the early 1980s. This “free association” was, particularly in its early stages, instrumental in the acquisition of services, urbanization, and improvement of the neighborhood. It continues to exist and operate today, but in order to understand its current position and challenges, it is instructive to consider the history of the association from its creation in 1984.

The group that mobilized to form the association in the early 1980s came primarily from militancy in the PDT and the Workers’ Party (PT), and in the context of resistance to the social control of the military dictatorship, they organized to pressure for local autonomy from the Fundação Leão XIII. When they succeeded in forming an independent residents association, elections were held and members of this group formed the slate of candidates, known as the ‘*Chapa Rosa*,’ who won the first three elections of the association. The Chapa Rosa is credited with acquiring many important services during this period, including the construction of schools, daycare centers and health clinics, the pavement of roads and sidewalks, connection to the

¹¹⁰ Jacques, 39

¹¹¹ Pandolfi and Grynzspan, 153.

electrical grid, and the expansion and improvement of water and sewage services. This was achieved by a combination of popular mobilization and the ability of Chapa Rosa leadership to negotiate the state's bureaucratic channels.¹¹²

This was certainly easier during the government of Leonel Brizola (1983-1987), the governor from the PDT who used populist tactics to co-opt local leadership in the *favelas*. However, the mechanisms of the PDT's brand of "thin" clientelism (as discussed in chapter two), ultimately backfired on the associations that engaged in it, forcing leaders shift from clientelism to popular mobilization. Brizola's strategy of straddling projects across elections in order to ensure his reelection meant that there were several public works projects in progress when Wellington Moreira Franco defeated Brizola in the 1987 gubernatorial election. Moreira Franco froze funding for all such projects, leaving Nova Holanda with torn up streets and incomplete water and sewage systems. The local association organized residents to protest and to occupy government offices downtown. Ultimately, the government agreed to complete the projects in Nova Holanda, even as they were abandoned in many other *favelas* of the city.¹¹³

However, Ernani Alcides Alexandre da Conceição, a Chapa Rosa organizer and vice president of the residents' association during the group's third term, explains that the association became progressively more "verticalized" toward the end of the 1980s. "A moment arrived in which the process of struggle [to improve the community] began to become personalized...there stopped being meetings attended by common residents." Combined with a general demobilization that accompanied the acquisition of most major urban services in Nova Holanda, this verticalization and personalization of leadership led to a considerable decline in participation

¹¹² Descriptions of early success of the Chapa Rosa come both from the interviews collected by Pandolfi and Grynzspan, and from my own interview with Roseni de Oliveira, the current Vice President of the residents association of Nova Holanda.

¹¹³ Pandolfi and Grynzspan, 156-157.

in the residents association.¹¹⁴ As a result, in the early 1990s the Chapa Rosa lost control of the association, which it would not retake until 2006.

Details of the period following the Chapa Rosa's eight years in control of the residents' association are much less clear. The personalization, verticalization, and demobilization are certainly only part of the story. Rosení de Oliveira, the current vice president of the association and a Health Director in the early years of Chapa Rosa, explained the transition as a simple electoral loss to a group with "different ideology." However, she explained that after a few terms of this group, elections for the associations ended and presidents began to be chosen "by appointment" ("*por indicação*"). It remained that way until 2006. What this suggests in the careful language of the 'law of silence' (*lei do silencio*) that governs *favelas* under the control of drug trafficking gangs, is that the traffickers appropriated control of the association and began to "appoint" its leadership. This has occurred in many *favelas* of Rio, and while it is beyond the scope of this investigation to examine exactly why and how the traffickers used the residents association in Nova Holanda, Arias provides some insight into how "low-status actors," like drug gangs, benefit from having a legitimate face through which to access government connections and resources.¹¹⁵

What I am interested in is the effect that the appropriation of the residents' association has had on the organizational landscape of Nova Holanda. Arias argues that although traffickers use residents' associations and to insert themselves into the clientelistic networks through which communities acquire services from the government, the appropriation of these networks by traffickers "drains the legitimacy created by clientelism out of the political system."¹¹⁶ In Nova Holanda this draining of legitimacy is part of the explanation for the demobilization of residents

¹¹⁴ Pandolfi and Grynzspan, 160.

¹¹⁵ Arias, 39.

¹¹⁶ Arias, 194.

in the 15 years following the period of the Chapa Rosa, and it has important implications for Rosení and her brother Rafael - the current leadership of the residents' association.

Rosení de Oliveira talked about the “distancing” between the people and the AM of Nova Holanda that occurred at the result of “many years in which the association wasn't really representing the interests of the community.” She describes how the association, once very active, now had only limited presence in the community:

It used to be that every project that was done in the community; health centers, crèches, etc. had someone linked to the residents' association. Today we don't have as many directors that are so involved in that work. It's difficult for a small group to be involved like that, on all fronts. And the association over the years...lost that space – to be managing, acting, participating in any and all projects that were done here. When we took back the association we had lost that space.¹¹⁷

The “loss of space” that Rosení describes is the challenge that defines the current work of the association's leadership. Having lost both the involvement of the community in the association and the involvement of the association in organizations and projects throughout the community, the new leadership is working to rebuild the legitimacy of the organization. This challenge is a difficult one, because the legitimacy that the association had in the period of the *Chapa Rosa* was derived from its effectiveness in delivering services and resources to the community. However, Gay shows that the ability of a residents' association to negotiate access to resources is directly related to its legitimacy in the community – only by being able to mobilize votes can the residents' association tap into the resources offered by the “thick” clientelistic practices which continue to operate during elections. Below I briefly discuss both

¹¹⁷ Interview: Rosení de Oliveira, Nova Holanda, August 19, 2008.

aspects of this project: the rebuilding of legitimacy and the use of that legitimacy to acquire resources for the community.

The process of rebuilding the legitimacy of the residents' association really began in 2005, when Jarvas, the last "appointed" president, suggested that the association return to an election system. While, again, the details of this transition are murky, a similar situation is occurring in many *favelas* in Rio; the traffickers are leaving the residents' associations and they are being "retaken" by local leaders. It is a recent phenomenon, and there is still no agreement as to whether it is due to a resurgent movement of community activists, or it is because traffickers have already cemented strong ties with representatives of the public power, and no longer rely on the associations' to access "legitimate" networks.¹¹⁸ In any case, it is in the context that the transition back to elections for the AM leadership occurred.

So, when we returned, when we decided to fight for this, we wanted to hold an election. Since we didn't have a defined electoral system, we did a project – 2 months of registration, to explain to people that there were going to be elections, and for those people who wanted to vote, we registered them. There were four tickets [*chapas*] running. So, we got together a representative from each ticket, and we called people to tell them that there was going to be an election, and that they had to register to be able to vote. In comparison to the number of residents, participation was relatively small. We have a lot of people in this community, but we have only about 2,000 registered – and not even all of them voted...Unfortunately, our people are not very organized, politically.¹¹⁹

The process of rebuilding legitimacy and community participation in the residents' association is clearly a difficult and painstaking process. Local leaders had to go door to door or

¹¹⁸ This topic is currently one of great interest among local scholars in Rio de Janeiro. However, the practices and intentions of the trafficking gangs are a notoriously difficult subject to study. In conversations with the anthropologist Mariana Cavalcanti and historian Maria Paula Araujo, I was told that nobody has with a clear answer to the question.

¹¹⁹ Rosení de Oliveira, August 19, 2008.

organize block meetings to explain that they were returning to elections and to convince people to register and vote. That these efforts yielded limited results in terms of registration is not surprising. After years of “distancing,” the association was viewed as ineffective and not representative of the community’s interests. Rosení explained that it was an ongoing process, and that the association under her and her brother was constantly working on new projects and “conquests” [*conquistas*] to demonstrate the association’s effectiveness and to achieve greater “insertion” in the community. However, the projects that they are currently involved in are few: registration of residences, production of small events in the plaza, distribution of condoms, conflict mediation between residents, and also efforts to improve urban services in the community. This is a very limited presence compared to what she described as the role of the association in the 1980s, when every project in the *favela* was connected to the association. However, the transition back to elections is a recent development and, as Rosení mentioned, the process of regaining the “lost space” in the community is difficult and slow.

It is clear that the perceived legitimacy and effectiveness of the association is tied to the ability of its leadership to access resources and deliver services to the community. Robert Gay shows us that this is often achieved through clientelistic channels – trading community votes for services during elections (“thick” clientelism) or establishing longer-term links with government officials and political parties that deliver goods to the community (“thin” clientelism). The history of the Chapa Rosa suggested a rejection of those sorts of networks in favor of direct mobilization of residents. However, what I discovered was that, at least in the early stages of rebuilding legitimacy, the association’s leadership was willing to engage with politicians using the practices of “thick” clientelism.

When asked about the current political affiliations of the association, Rosení emphasized that the AM was “without party affiliation” [*apartidária*]. However, she clarified that *apartidária* did not mean apolitical:

There is political involvement because *in election season there are many politicians that come looking for us [nos procuram]*. People associated with the AM have their own political parties, because people are free to have their own political ideas. But as an association we have no party affiliation, because the association represents the residents, and “the residents” is plural with regard to political party. *Now my brother [the association’s president] is supporting a candidate, but it’s because he believes that this candidate is going to be contributing something for the community.*¹²⁰

Rosení’s discussion of her brother’s support of a candidate is revealing. It demonstrates that, although the Chapa Rosa was, in its earlier iterations, more oriented toward mobilizing residents to protest directly to state offices, rather than engaging in clientelistic networks and negotiations, her brother’s exchange of support for the expectation of a candidate’s “contributing something” for the community is a clear example of “thick” clientelism. The discourse of “political involvement” without party affiliation is not an insignificant detail. Indeed, as Gay points out this is an important characteristic of “thick” clientelistic relations. The strategy of the association’s leadership for acquiring resources for the community is tied to periodic and temporary agreements with individual politicians, rather than enduring ties to a political party.

I mention these processes of rebuilding legitimacy and using clientelistic networks to access resources to explain the decline in importance of this traditional structure for community organization, and to highlight the current challenge faced by the residents’ association of Nova Holanda. Given that only two years have elapsed since the association was retaken by local

¹²⁰ Rosení de Oliveira, August 19, 2008 [Emphasis added].

leaders I am hesitant to draw any conclusions about the effects of their strategies of legitimacy-building and resource capturing. It remains unclear whether or not the residents' association will be able to return to something resembling its earlier level of activity and insertion into the community, or if it will remain atrophied by the "distancing" and draining of legitimacy resulting from years of trafficker control. However, what is apparent is that the "distancing" that occurred between the community and the residents' association in the 1990s represented the loss, at least temporarily, of what was historically the most effective organizational force for improving the lives of residents in the *favela*. Its appropriation by traffickers in Nova Holanda, as in many *favelas* in Rio, left a sort of organizational gap which came to be filled in the mid-1990s by local NGOs.

Grassroots NGOs: Origins and activity in Nova Holanda

Today, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) constitute some of the most important organized actors in Nova Holanda and elsewhere, providing services in health and education, programs to steer youths away from the drug gangs, and gathering information on *favelas* to demand change in urban policy across the city. They are funded by a mix of private donors, international non-profits and government grants, and their use of media to draw attention to the plight of *favela* residents have attracted increasing national and foreign attention and resources to their projects. I consider below four local NGOs in Nova Holanda with diverse objectives and origins. However, it is necessary first to understand the context – both citywide and in the Complexo de Maré – in which these NGOs were created.

1993 is generally considered to be the beginning of the veritable explosion of local NGO activity in the *favelas* of Rio de Janeiro. In August of that year, a group of military police murdered 21 residents of the North Zone *favela* of Vigário Geral, reportedly in revenge for the

murder of police officers by the drug gang which controlled the neighborhood. Following this infamous slaughter of residents, the Grupo Cultural Afro Reggae, a group publishing a small cultural magazine, organized a march from the center of the city to Vigário Geral to protest the violence. The group began to frequent the *favela* and set up a cultural organization with the objective of offering alternatives to youths who were otherwise at risk of joining the trafficking gang.¹²¹ The group was successful at using the media to increase the visibility of the problems of the community and diffuse the organization's objectives, and it managed to attract support from many Brazilian cultural and intellectual figures, as well as funding from national and international organizations.¹²²

The national and international attention that the massacre and Afro Reggae's response generated was not limited to Vigário Geral. It created broader awareness of the problems of violence – both by traffickers and police – in Rio's *favelas*. Funded by an expanding number of national and international donors, many new local NGOs began to form in *favelas* throughout Rio de Janeiro, many adopting a similar model to Afro Reggae of using cultural, educational, or athletic activities to draw at-risk youths away from the drug trade. In the Complexo de Maré, perhaps the most important group created in this new wave of grassroots NGOs was the Centro de Estudos e Ações Solidárias da Maré (Center for Studies and Actions of Solidarity of Maré, CEASM). It was formed in 1997 in Morro do Timbau, the oldest *favela* in the Complexo, by a group of residents from Maré. Focused on education and culture, it began with classes to prepare youths for the national university entrance exam. Today it involves thousands of Maré's residents in numerous programs, including the publication of a magazine, local research projects

¹²¹ Strozenberg, Ilana and Maria Paula Araujo, "Projetos culturais, formação de lideranças populares e estratégias de inclusão social" (paper presented at the Encuentro de Historia Oral de Argentina, 2007), 3-4.

¹²² Araujo, Maria Paula and Ecio Salles. *História e Memória de Vigário Geral* (Rio de Janeiro: Aeroplano, 2008) 138-140.

(including a census of the Complexo performed in 2000), and theater, dance, and arts projects for children and youths.¹²³ Although CEASM is not located in Nova Holanda, its history is relevant both because two of the most important NGOs in Nova Holanda – Observatorio de *Favelas* and REDES da Maré – grew out of the CEASM, but also because it began the process of local NGO formation in the Complexo de Maré. In this context of city-wide expansion of these grassroots organizations, and the strong base for NGO activity in Maré created by CEASM, I examine the formation and activities of four local NGOs in Nova Holanda.

CEASM and its discontents: Expansion of NGOs to Nova Holanda

It is impossible to separate the current organizational life of nearly any *favela* in the Complexo da Maré from the important influence of CEASM. The formation of this group not only began the expansion of grassroots NGOs through Maré, but it served as a training ground for a generation of local leaders. It is thus that I situate the stories of two of Nova Holanda's most important NGOs – Observatorio de *Favelas* and REDES da Maré - in relation to CEASM, from which both groups were formed, albeit under very different circumstances. While the former was created as a project within the CEASM, the later was created by a group of young leaders who left CEASM, displeased with its methods and strategies.

Observatório de Favelas

The Observatório de *Favelas* ('Observatory of *Favelas*') began as a project of the CEASM in 2001, called the Observatorio Social da Maré ('Social Observatory of Maré'), formed from a group within the NGO who had participated in a local census project in 2000. The project was intended to generate and diffuse knowledge about the *favela* from within. As Mário Simão, one of the coordinators explained to me, "it's one thing to talk about the *favela* from the outside, and another thing if you are actually from the *favela*." Hence, the Observatório project began

¹²³ Strozenberg and Araujo, 4.

with the idea to generate ideas and information about the *favela* from the inside. From within the project, however, came the idea of a more general Observatório that wasn't limited in scope to Maré alone.

In 2003, the directors of the project set up a separate NGO, Observatório de *Favelas* in Nova Holanda which does exactly that. "It's important to note that it's '*favelas*', plural," said Mário. Today, the Observatório works to gather and diffuse information and knowledge about *favelas* throughout the city. Although it also includes programs for children and youths, Mário clarified that "we aren't trying to provide services, but rather we are trying to change the image of *favelas*, which have been criminalized and discriminated against, and to change public policy with regard to the *favelas*." He explains that even their youth programs have that orientation, citing a photography program in which children were trained to take photos in the community to show "another face of the *favela*." All of their funding is received per project, and comes from a variety of national and international sources, including Petrobrás (the state petroleum company), UNICEF, the Ford Foundation and the national Secretary of Culture. However, Mário mentioned that this was difficult, as it takes a great deal of time and effort to continuously apply for projects. However, he explained that the Observatório hoped to receive institutional support from a Dutch ecclesiastical NGO, which would allow them greater financial stability.¹²⁴

REDES da Maré

While Observatório emerged from CEASM almost as an extension of the older organization, another group left the organization on quite different terms. Redes de Desenvolvimento da Maré (commonly referred to as "REDES"), rather than having grown out of a project of CEASM, left the NGO in 2007 because of "different conceptions of politics." Edson Diniz, a director of REDES and a former member of CEASM, described the split:

¹²⁴ Interview: Mário Pires Simão, Nova Holanda, August 6, 2008.

CEASM was growing, and that was cool, but they ended up falling into a contradiction, one into with NGOs generally fall, which is that they became a service-provider organization. So, they offer classes for the sake of having classes, or they have some action for its own sake. And it's great that they offer computer classes, or that they have classes of pre-vestibular [university entrance exam]. But what is the objective of these classes? This is really the reason why we separated: we thought that these actions should impact the territory...they have to impact the deeper issues that change the reality of the *favela*. They were helping to educate the elite of the *favela*, who go to the university and then leave to make money and that's it.¹²⁵

Although REDES offers many of the same classes and cultural programs that CEASM had before, Edson explained that they are all oriented around the question of “What can we do to impact the reality of the *favela*?”

REDES also receives funding by project, from private businesses and international organizations, including Rotary International, Banco do Brasil, Petrobrás, and Worldfund. Although they work with a program of the Secretary of Education, Edson specified that the relationship does not involve any resources. One of the challenges, he explained, was in acquiring the funding necessary to continue running their programs:

It's easier for CEASM, since they've been around for 10 years. A lot of people who knew how to do certain projects came with us. For example, the people who ran the pre-vestibular are here, the people who directed the Children's Program are all here. The people came here, they're here in REDES. So we have all the people who know how to run these programs, but when we have to deal with bureaucracy [in applying for funds] it's more difficult, because there's a lot of distrust toward new organizations.¹²⁶

¹²⁵ Interview: Edson Diniz, Nova Holanda, August 12, 2008.

¹²⁶ Edson Diniz, August 12, 2008.

Thus, while the nascent NGO has the capacity to run several types of projects, a major challenge lies in being able to access resources from the various business and organizations that fund local NGOs in Rio, a topic I will return to in my conclusion.

While both Observatório and REDES grew out of CEASM, they left under very different circumstances. One began as a CEASM project, and while its leadership left the NGO to expand the project, it maintains ties to CEASM. The other separated for reasons of “political difference.” It felt that CEASM had become an assistentialist organization which, although it certainly helps residents of Maré, does little to address the underlying problems faced by the community and its inhabitants. It is important to note that both of these NGOs aim to address problems of the community in a more structural way. Although both groups provide services, they provide them with an orientation toward effecting some more fundamental change in the community. For Observatório, this means using their research and knowledge production to provide accurate information about *favelas* and demand changes in public policy at the city and national levels. Although REDES has a more territorially limited agenda, they aim to use partnerships with local organizations and institutions, such as schools, to improve the overall conditions for residents, rather than simply providing services “for their own sake.”

What makes this particularly significant is that the objectives of structural change were largely absent from the agendas of “traditional” organized forces who used clientelistic networks to access resources. As Robert Gay points out, using clientelistic networks to acquire resources often means “voting for candidates who feel comfortable exploiting the misery and uncertainty of *favela* life and who, therefore, have little or no interest in the elimination of current level of socioeconomic and political inequality.”¹²⁷ Indeed, the nature of traditional clientelistic structures in Rio de Janeiro incentivized maintaining a status quo of deep inequalities that

¹²⁷ Gay (1994), 142.

offered access to the votes in a transactional structure. Even when local leaders were able to use such structures to gain resources and improve the community, ultimately their effectiveness depended as well on the maintenance of clientelistic ties. It is apparent that access to resources through non-clientelistic ties (ie. private and NGO financing) permits an agenda that addresses the problems of the *favela* at a more fundamental and structural level. Although not all local NGOs do, in fact, have such an agenda (Edson argues that CEASM does not), the lack of dependence on clientelistic ties to access resources and therefore be “effective” leaders allows local NGOs to engage in a discourse of a structural rather than palliative approach to the problems of their community, and indeed of *favelas* more generally.

De fora pra dentro: Creation of Local NGOs from “Outside”

Since 1993, there has been a proliferation of city-wide NGOs along with the explosion of local NGO activity throughout the city. Rather than being territorially focused on a single *favela*, these groups create programs that are applied to a number of different communities. They also act as a conduit of resources, particularly from international donors who want established organizations through which to contribute to alleviating problems in the *favelas*. Probably the best known of these city-wide NGOs is Viva Rio, which was created in December of 1993 and continues to be active throughout the city. Commonly referred to as “*ONGs de fora*”, or “NGOs from outside,” within the *favelas* these NGOs are often regarded with a degree of distrust. Whenever people in the *favela* refer to the work of an NGO, they are quick to specify whether a group is local or “*de fora*.” Nevertheless, many local organizations are funded or formed by these city-wide NGOs and other “outside” organizations. In Nova Holanda, the local NGOs Luta Pela Paz, and Instituto Vida Real were both formed from “outside.”

Luta Pela Paz

Luta Pela Paz (literally, “fight for peace”) was founded in 2000 as a project of Viva Rio. It was conceived by a former British boxer, Luke Dowdney, who approached Viva Rio to create the program. Luta Pela Paz offers boxing training to children and youths in Maré, as well as citizenship and computer classes. The program aims to draw young residents of the *favela* away from participation in the trafficking gang by engaging them in alternative activities and providing them with new opportunities. Today there are hundreds of children and youths from Maré who participate in the NGO’s activities.¹²⁸

Extremely well-funded by a number of European NGOs, it is currently housed in new, two-story training and educational facility in Nova Holanda that the program built in 2005. As Juliana, a member of the Luta Pela Paz administrative staff, explained, until 2007 all of the program’s funding came through Viva Rio, although it was Dowdney who found most of it, soliciting support from European non-profits private donors. However, when the program began to seek outside resources it found that many donors wouldn’t contribute because they were already contributing to Viva Rio. As a result, it became an independent NGO in 2007, taking with it the funding that Dowdney had found for Viva Rio and making possible the pursuit of additional resources. Certainly, the involvement of Dowdney and his success at acquiring resources make Luta Pela Paz an exceptional case, but it serves to illustrate how a local NGO can be created from a project of an “outside” NGO.¹²⁹

¹²⁸ The creation and mission of Luta Pela Paz is detailed on the organization’s official website: <http://www.fightforpeace.net>. More information was provided by Carol, program administrator at the organization (August 20, 2008).

¹²⁹ Interview: Juliana, Nova Holanda, August 20, 2008

Instituto Vida Real

Another example of a local organization created from “outside” is the Instituto Vida Real. Created in 2005 by Sebastião Antonio de Araújo (known as Seu Tião), Vida Real is a youth center which offers various classes and activities to youths, requiring in exchange that they remain in school. Seu Tião related to me the story of Vida Real’s creation:

I used to work as an inspector in a school here in Nova Holanda. In 2004 a person came to the school who wanted to do some interviews with young people who were directly involved in the traffick. They came to me and asked if I could set up interviews with some of these kids, because I was someone who was known in the community – I’ve been in the *favela* for 45 years. So I asked what they wanted to know exactly what they wanted to talk to the kids about, and participate in the interviews myself. It turned out that the person was filming a documentary. So he interviewed ten boys, and afterward, he told me he wanted to give some money to the boys for participating. He called me later and told me that he had R\$600. I said: I’m not going to pick up the money. They don’t need money. What do they need? They need a house where they can have activities, get help with schoolwork, where they have something to do with there time. He told me he didn’t have the money for that, but two days later he called me and told me that he wanted to set up a meeting with me the president of the Instituto da Criança, which now funds the project.¹³⁰

Unlike Luta Pela Paz, the Instituto Vida Real remains a project of the Instituto da Criança, a national organization that funds programs for children. However, in several other interviews it was identified as a “local NGO,” largely thanks to Seu Tião’s status as a “*cara conhecido*” – a “well-known guy” in the *favela*. This attribution has had important implications for Vida Real beyond the local legitimacy that it confers on the organization. As is clear from Seu Tião’s story

¹³⁰ Interview: Sebastião Antonio de Araújo (Seu Tião), Nova Holanda, August 22, 2008.

of Vida Real's establishment, his status in the community made him a reference point for an outsider looking to work in the *favela*. The filmmaker trying to interview youths was directed to Seu Tião, which made him a central point in a network which he was later able to use to acquire the necessary resources to set up the organization.

Perhaps more significant, however, was Seu Tião's ability to navigate the challenges of operating a center for delinquent youths in a neighborhood controlled by a trafficking gang. Shortly after setting up the Instituto, he explained, he paid a visit to the leadership of the local gang: "I went to the gang's headquarters [*quartel do comando*], to talk to the boss [*comandante*]. And I told him: 'don't hang around the institute when it's operating.' Because 90% of the kids were at one point involved in the traffick."¹³¹ While it can be very dangerous for local leaders and organizers to confront the traffickers, it is important to remember that, even in areas where traffickers have territorial control, they still to some degree rely on residents for the "protection of anonymity." Thus, as in La Legua, local leaders in Nova Holanda can successfully make requests of or indirectly pressure the traffickers. Seu Tião's status in the community added an important degree of force to his request, as responding unfavorably to him (let alone assassinating him) would cost the traffickers considerable local support. Seu Tião was not only able to navigate the local environment for setting up an organization for local youths, but thanks to his status as a *cara conhecido* he was able to position himself as a conduit for resources that would enable to creation of the Instituto Vida Real. Thus, while the initial impetus for the formation of the organization, as well as the resources, came from outside the *favela*, Seu Tião was a central actor who gave shape to the project and lent it the local legitimacy necessary to be successful within the *favela*.

¹³¹ Sebastião Antonio de Araújo, August 22, 2008.

V. Conclusion

When I first began this project, it was my intention to do a comparative investigation of what I considered to be two analogous cases. While Nova Holanda and La Legua have very different histories, they also share some important characteristics: both were government-recognized in their creation, an important feature distinguishing them from *poblaciones callampas* and the better-known hillside *favelas* built by illegal squatters; both have important legacies of local organization, even under the military dictatorships in both Chile and Brazil; and both are today emblematic neighborhoods, stigmatized as sites of poverty, violence and drug-related crime. At the national level, both Chile and Brazil are ruled by governments which are often referred to as belonging to the “neoliberal left.” Both President Lula, in Brazil and President Bachelet, in Chile belong to parties of the left (the Workers’ Party and the Socialist Party, respectively), yet both have maintained the neoliberal economic policies that were initially put in place by the military governments. Such policies include increasing privatization of services, decreased government spending, a retrenchment of the welfare state, political decentralization and openness to international markets. For the poor who inhabit the urban peripheries of Santiago and Rio de Janeiro, this has meant a considerable decline in employment opportunities as industrial sectors declined in both cities, increasing inequality, and diminish quality and access to essential government services like education, health care, and urban services.

Given these parallels at both the local and national levels, these two neighborhoods appeared to merit comparison. Yet, as I have detailed in previous chapters, what I found were very distinct local organizational landscapes, both quantitatively and qualitatively. In La Legua, local organizations focused on small cultural and social projects, with some addressing more

service-oriented issues like health. As I described in chapter three, these organizations were fragmented, both because they each brought together small numbers of people with narrow objectives, and as a result of the visible and incisive political divide that separates groups linked to the ruling Concertación from those with ties to the Communist Party. In contrast, the grassroots NGOs in Nova Holanda were larger, and while they also engaged in cultural, social and educational projects, they worked toward more overarching objectives – most importantly that of steering children and youths away from the drug trade. These groups were also much more connected to one another, with the logic, as one NGO director explained, that “trying to make a real impact on the *favela* is impossible for a single organization.”¹³²

Relative cohesion was certainly not the only important difference. During my fieldwork, all of my interviews in La Legua were conducted in people’s homes, which often doubled as bases of operations for their organizations, while in Nova Holanda I met with people in the offices and centers of their organizations; centers which ranged from rented office space above shops to brand new multi-level facilities built by and for the NGO. Rather than a detail of form, such infrastructural contrast is a reflection of a very significant disparity in the resources available to the organizations in each of these communities. Yet amid these substantial differences of scope, scale and form, there was an important parallel. In both La Legua and Nova Holanda, a new type of local leader had emerged whose ability to access pools of resources has enabled these organizations to operate and advance.

The Resource Capturer: New local leadership of the neoliberal era

In his history of several *poblaciones* in the northern zone of Santiago, historian Mario Garcés observes: “While some consider that in the 1960s being a *dirigente* [local leader] was a vocation particularly stimulated by dynamic social participation, currently, as a product of the

¹³² Edson Diniz, August 12, 2008.

changes that have occurred in our society, being a *dirigente* is associated with knowledge and navigation [*manejo*] of the Network of Social Benefits and state subsidies, and the institutional mechanisms of participation.”¹³³ In my investigation in La Legua this shift was clear. The ability of a *dirigente* to maintain the vitality of their organization depended on their ability to access state services and resources. While in chapter three I focused primarily on the importance of municipal project grants, this grant system was hardly the only state service that local leaders used their knowledge and connections to tap into. To cite a couple of examples, the *Consejo de Salud* was engaged in directing people to local health services that were available to them, and La Red’s work on drug prevention included the important capacity to find and take advantage of the rare empty room in overcrowded drug rehabilitation centers. Thus, beyond simply tapping into raw resources in the form of municipal grants, these local leaders were able to use the additional resource of familiarity with a larger network of social benefits.

Even organizations and leaders who were opposed to the politics of the municipal government were not universally opposed to accessing or attempting to access these resources. Greaves attributes this concentration of grassroots activity around the municipality to the fact that “in contrast to political parties, [local governments] seemed to be able to deliver tangible results.”¹³⁴ In the earlier era of “dynamic social participation” observed by Garcés, these tangible results may have been less important in maintaining broader organizational struggles linked to political parties, but today the ability to access and deliver such results (read: resources) can make or break an organization. This was evident in Luz’s explanation of the shrinking of La Red from 22 to 14 organizations when government resources stopped coming. She also made reference to another network of social networks in La Legua de Emergencia, which became

¹³³ Garcés, Mario. *Historia de la Comuna de Huechuraba: Memoria y oralidad popular* (Santiago: ECO, 1997), 185.

¹³⁴ Greaves, 201.

defunct once it was no longer able to access state resources.¹³⁵ It is apparent that in the current context, this new type of *dirigente* – the resource capturer – is a (if not *the*) key player in the local organizational life of La Legua.

Brazilian historian José Murilo de Carvalho makes note of an analogous development in Rio de Janeiro his introduction to a collection of interviews with *favela* leaders: “communities discovered that they didn’t have to depend on outside NGOs [*ONGs de fora*] and they began to create their own organizations to capture resources from the State and from private sources. An unknown specialist emerged in the *favela*: the project writer for resource capturing [*o fazedor de projetos para captação de recursos*].”¹³⁶

As I outlined in previous chapters, traffickers in many *favelas*, including Nova Holanda, took control of the neighborhood associations. This meant the emptying of participation and legitimacy from the traditional structures through which *favela* residents made demands and acquired resources. Faced with this sort of organizational void, local groups needed to pursue alternative methods to access resources and acquire services or the means to provide them, and they needed to do this within the constraint of high levels of trafficker control and violence in their neighborhoods. It was in this context that NGOs became increasingly important over the course of the 1990s. Initially it was the larger, city-wide NGOs that were able to make national and international contacts which afforded them the resources to create projects in *favelas* throughout the city. However, while these city-wide NGOs continue to be important players in many *favelas*, and in some cases even create local NGOs from their projects (as was the case with Luta Pela Paz in Nova Holanda), the emergence of this previously “unknown specialist” in

¹³⁵ Luz Bustos, July 12, 2008.

¹³⁶ José Murilo de Carvalho, Preface to *A favela fala : depoimentos ao CPDOC*, organized by Pandolfi, Dulce Chaves and Mario Grynzspan, organizadores (Rio de Janeiro: FGV Ed., 2003), 8-9.

favela organizations have allowed grassroots NGOs to access state and private resources without the mediation of “outside” groups.

In most of my interviews in Nova Holanda, NGO founders and workers cited the continual challenges of the time- and work-intensive process of acquiring funding. Such funding was largely secured through, as Carvalho observes, writing project grants. With the notable exception of Luta Pela Paz, NGOs in Nova Holanda had no institutional funding, and as a result had to repeatedly apply for financing by project. To fulfill this necessary role, NGO founders and workers had to become specialists in this process, both by maintaining contacts with potential funders – state, private, and international – and knowing how to navigate the process of soliciting resources. Even in the cases of Luta Pela Paz and Vida Real, both organizations were writing projects for additional funding despite having stable support from primary funders. In fact, Luta Pela Paz became an independent organization from the city-wide NGO, Viva Rio, in order to be able to pursue additional resources more effectively. In all of these local NGOs, as with the local groups in La Legua, the resource capturer has been an essential character that secured and expanded each organization’s access to financing from a number of potential sources.

Differential Resource Access

As I noted previously, there was a considerable difference between my two sites in the amount of resources available to local organizations. While NGO leaders and workers in Nova Holanda were generally full-time paid staff of their organizations, *dirigentes* in La Legua were almost all workers whose organizational activities happened after-hours. And while in Nova Holanda each NGO had its own rented, owned, or built space, a common complaint among organizers in La Legua was the lack of readily available spaces to hold meetings and activities. These differences are quite significant, as the resources (or lack thereof) available to local

organizations are an important constraint on their activity, defining what they can do, when they can do it, and how many people in the community they can engage or assist. Thus, it is important to understand why there is such a disparity in access to resources between the two sites.

In order to understand this resource gap, I borrow from McCarthy and Zald's (1977) work on resource mobilization and social movements. Although this work is based on social movements in the United States in the 1960s and 1970s, some of its main concepts can be applied, with adjustments, to the cases that I examine. Resource mobilization theory offers us useful categories of types of people with regard to social movements. Here I would like to consider two: bystander publics and constituents. Bystander publics are those people who are neither adherents to nor opponents of a particular social movement, while constituents are those that contribute resources (monetary or otherwise) to the social movement. Publics and constituents are further distinguished between "mass" and "elite," which control small and large resource pools, respectively.

McCarthy and Zald posit that "As the amount of discretionary resources of mass and elite publics increases, the absolute and relative amount of resources available to the social movement sector increases."¹³⁷ In a comparative framework it is logical, then, to consider the different "publics" from which resource pools are accessed by organizations in La Legua and Nova Holanda. This does not necessarily mean comparing the urban publics of Santiago and Rio de Janeiro, or the national publics of Brazil and Chile. Rather, I would argue that *favela* organizations are able to access resources from an international public that encompasses potential constituents (NGOs and private donors) in Europe and North America, as well as in

¹³⁷ McCarthy, John and Mayer Zald, "Resource Mobilization and Social Movements: A Partial Theory," *American Journal of Sociology* 82 (1977): 1224.

Brazil. In contrast, organizations in La Legua only have access to a national, if not only urban, public.

In concrete terms, this means that the potential pools of resources that can be tapped into by resource capturers within local organizations in Nova Holanda are both larger and more numerous than those available to leaders in La Legua. The NGO workers in Nova Holanda listed sources of funding that included national and international NGOs, national (i.e. Petrobrás) and private businesses, and small local government grants. Their constituents are thus drawn from local, national and international publics. In La Legua, the municipal government has a near monopoly on provision of resources to local organizations, although there was some access to the small resources pools of a city-wide NGO (ECO) and the Communist Party. However, all of these constituents are within, at the most, a national scale.

This has not always been the case in Chile. In fact, during the 1980s there was considerably more funding from international sources to NGOs throughout the country as political repression and poverty in Chile received significant international attention. However, the transition to a representative government in 1990, coupled with the Chilean “economic miracle” of the late 1980s, moved the country out of the limelight of the international aid community. Today, local NGOs are few and the little international funding that remains for them is channeled through the central government.¹³⁸

To this considerable disparity in the publics from which resource capturers in these two communities draw their respective constituencies, I would add another important explanatory variable, within the same framework, for divergent access to resources. That is the relative success of these groups in performing what McCarthy and Zald call the “strategic task” of

¹³⁸ Paley, 131.

“transforming mass and elite publics into sympathizers”¹³⁹ and, I would add, into constituents.

The capacity of NGOs in Rio de Janeiro to use national and international media to draw attention to the problems of *favelas* and the projects to attempt to alleviate them, has been instrumental in expanding the number of national and international resource pools to which both local and city-wide NGOs have access. Local organizations in the urban periphery of Santiago have had no comparable media success. While *poblaciones* are regularly in the news in Chile, they are seen only as sites of drugs and criminality, and international media attention is nonexistent. Thus, organizations of Chile’s *poblaciones* have had less capacity to convert their relatively limited publics to constituents.

It is apparent that both differential access to international publics and the capacity to transform those publics into sympathizers and constituents are important factors in explaining the disparity in resources available to organizations in each of these sites. However, given the small sample size of the data, these findings are only preliminary. In addition to looking more specifically at the resource pools that resource capturers in these two sites tap into (or attempt to tap into), these effects need to be verified across communities within these two cities. These are two areas for future work on this subject.

The Resource Capturer and Clientelism

Fundamentally, this thesis is about different types of networks through which local actors in *favelas* and *poblaciones* can acquire resources. The kinds of clientelistic networks introduced in chapter two have historically been (and in some cases continue to be) some of the most important resource channels in Latin American urban peripheries. Thus, it is useful to examine how the idea of the “resource capturer” fits into the framework of clientelism.

¹³⁹ McCarthy and Zald, 1217.

In referring to the resource capturer as a new form of local leadership I do not mean to suggest that they necessarily constitute a novel type of resource network. Rather, I consider resource capturer to be a position in what McCarthy and Zald label a “Social Movement career.” This is a position held by adherents in several organizations within a social movement that develops when the movement is sufficiently large.¹⁴⁰ In the networks that I describe, these “career” positions have developed because of the relative stability of the resource pools that these groups can tap into, and thus a skill set is developed around the need and ability to access them. As I’ve explained, the necessary skills and connections are not identical in Santiago and Rio de Janeiro, but this does not mean that these new leaders in each community necessarily constitute different career positions. Rather, these differences are a reflection of variations between the pools of resources available to the organizations in each neighborhood, and the different specific set of skills required to tap into them.

This is an important distinction because, as I’ve argued, the changing networks through which local organizations access resources have led to a new form of “thin” clientelism in La Legua, while in Nova Holanda a set of resource networks has emerged that constitute an alternative to the double-barreled clientelism of the 1990s. The question, then, is how has the emergence of analogous types of new local leadership in these two communities been accompanied by seemingly opposite developments in terms of clientelism – with one moving toward and the other away from a clientelistic structure?

The answer lies in the fact that what defines clientelistic access to resources is not *that* these organizations and leaders tap into available resources pools, but rather *from whom the resources are acquired* and the *meanings and conditions* attached to those resources. In this

¹⁴⁰ McCarthy and Zald, 1235.

light, we can see how parallel forms of new leadership in Nova Holanda and La Legua can lead to divergent types of networks for resource acquisition.

As I outlined in chapter three, for local organizations in La Legua, the municipal government is almost the exclusive fount of potential resources. Familiarity with the process and the people involved (i.e. representatives of the municipal government) in tapping into that resource pool - whether in the form of project grants or access to scarce government services - is rewarded with easier access. This, as Greaves argues, leads to the formation of networks between *dirigentes* and municipal authorities, and can blur the line between *dirigente* and municipal official.¹⁴¹ Implicit in the formation of these networks is the understanding that a continuation of control by the same municipal officials also means a continuation of facilitated resource access, and the converse scenario would spell the disruption, if not unraveling of those networks. Given the municipal government's near-monopoly on local resource pools, the meaning attached to the grants and services that these resource capturers can acquire is clear: continued access is contingent upon reelection.

In Nova Holanda, the gap left by the emptying of legitimacy of the residents' association – the traditional structure for the acquisition of resources in many *favelas* – opened the path to a pluralization of channels for accessing resources. It is in this context that the new resource capturer emerged, able to circumvent the traditional route to resource pools through the explicitly transactional “thick” clientelism. Instead, the leadership of grassroots NGOs became adept at converting much broader publics into constituents, diversifying the resource pools to which they had access. More importantly, these new constituents were primarily NGOs and private donors, which did not have the same local political interests as the municipal authorities of San Joaquín in Santiago. While the local government is still a source of funds for these organizations, it lacks

¹⁴¹ Greaves, 207.

the monopoly that municipal authorities have in Santiago, and as a result any attached conditions, whether implicit or explicit, don't have the same impact.

It is not the nature of the resource capturer as a new type leader that determines whether or not the networks for resource access are or become clientelistic. Rather, this divergence lies in the motivations and interests of those who control available resource pools. In this way, the parallel development of the resource capturer across the two sites of La Legua and Nova Holanda has occurred along with the emergence of two very different structures – one newly clientelistic and the other a post-clientelism arising from the atrophy of old networks.

Resource access and segmented collectivism

In both of the cases that I have examined, the dependence of local organizations on access to external resource pools is heightened by the need for these actors to be able to deliver tangible results in order to build legitimacy in their communities. In countries like Chile and Brazil, with governments of the neoliberal left, the persistent dependence on local organizations to deliver concrete goods or services is coupled with the efforts of these regimes to curb the development of broad, counter-hegemonic discourses among dispossessed sectors of society. This objective of neoliberal governments is at the heart of Roberts' idea of "segmented collectivism" in which individuals and organizations are encouraged by the regime to focus on local, particular problems rather than form a broader discourse.

Given this objective, an understanding of local organizations and how they form, operate, and generate discourse is key. And, as I have argued access to resources is an essential part of the equation, as control of resource pools is one of the most important channels for shaping and controlling local discourse. As I have detailed in earlier chapters, the "thin" clientelism that developed between local organizations and the municipal government in La Legua has also had

the effect of “localizing” the problems of the community by localizing the available remedies – resources and services channeled through the municipality. In contrast, the broader post-clientelistic networks for resource access created by the grassroots NGOs in Nova Holanda has allowed for the development within these groups of discourses that are both counter-hegemonic (a discourse of “structural change” in *favelas*, for example) and extra-local, linking the problems of *favelas* throughout Rio de Janeiro and even throughout Brazil. While the resource networks that allow or stifle the development of such discourses may only be part of the explanation, their significance is apparent.

There is much room for new research to be done on this topic. As I have argued throughout this chapter, I believe that there is a great deal of insight that can be gained from applying resource mobilization theory to these cases. This has the potential to go beyond the explanation of the development of “career” positions like the resource capturer, or the differential access to resource pools. It can be used to gain a further understanding of cycles of mobilization and demobilization in these communities, as well as the often complex role of governments, both local and national, in contributing to, shaping, or impeding such mobilization. With some adjustment, many elements from this theory can be usefully applied to context of community organizations and grassroots NGOs in the urban peripheries of Latin America and, indeed, the global South more generally.

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