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Chapter 9

The reinvention of a peripheral neighborhood in Lisbon: Reflections on urban art, ethnography and public policy

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1. Introduction

Quinta do Mocho, located in the district of Loures, has become known in the media as one of the major 'problematic neighborhoods' in the Lisbon metropolitan area, a label based on the supposed relationship between its young residents and crime. But the reason that is currently putting Quinta do Mocho in the news is art, since the area has been transformed into one of the most important urban art hotspots in Portugal, with more than 70 large-scale works (graffiti, paintings, sculptures) decorating the social housing buildings that are home to roughly 3,000 people.

Originally subversive, illegal and non-commercial (Campos, 2010; Ferro, 2016), graffiti is undergoing the effects of 'artification' (Shapiro and Heinich, 2013). Its reconfiguration by several agents - local authorities, the media, academia, urbanists, cultural entrepreneurs - has changed its 'marginal' status to legitimize it in the art world. It is against this backdrop that the once-maligned graffiti is transformed into urban art, becoming immersed in commercial processes that serve the goals of planning, promoting and resolving a city's social issues. This is the case of the Quinta do Mocho public art gallery (*Galeria de Arte Pública* – GAP), a project organized by Loures Municipal Council (LMC) which began in 2014, that is changing the way the neighborhood is seen by the outside world and involves the participation of some young residents. They are the ones leading the guided tours, on which they present a perspective different from the traditional stereotypes. While artistic expressions are excellent ways to overcome segregation and stigmatization processes among subaltern groups, it is important to debate their limits and the political exploitation of art when approaching social issues. In this situation, ethnography is an important ally for the researcher, allowing him or her to look at the situation 'from within' (Burgess, 1997),

encouraging 'dense descriptions' of what is at stake beneath the surface (Geertz, 2008).

2. Ethnography at the Quinta do Mocho public art gallery

Transformed into one of the largest open-air urban art galleries in Europe, Quinta do Mocho has attracted thousands of tourists from Portugal and abroad since 2015 (according to LMC, roughly 1500 people visited the neighborhood in 2016 as part of the guided tours organized by GAP, a number that rose to more than 3000 in 2017). This would have been unthinkable a few years ago, when the area was imagined as one of transgression and 'anomie'. This process of change offers enormous wealth if approached using ethnography based on the community guides, its central figures. The neighborhood has ultimately been reclassified in discourse by politicians and the media, and this is largely thanks to them. But the reason that led me to visit Quinta do Mocho was another.

My initial research objective was to focus on Spot, a social project supported by the Choices Program (*Programa Escolhas*, or PE) operating in the area. It was at that project that I met Kedy, in 2015, one of the most active community guides, whose collaboration with LMC was in its early stages. Faced with the metamorphosis that the neighborhood was going through and its excellent position for reflecting on that process, I changed the focus of the research, beginning to accompany the guides on the tours they ran and in the everyday spaces they frequented.

The first trips in the field were made in 2015, but it was only in February 2016 that I began to visit Quinta do Mocho regularly, ethnographic immersion that required 48 trips to the field up to January 2018. Ethnography was an excellent instrument for understanding the implementation of that public policy from below, in the places where the urban art actions and the residents' experiences took place, moving beyond the institutional outlook (Trouillot, 2011). To become familiar with the urban art project, at the beginning of the research I chose to explore the guided tours ethnographically. These were excellent moments for understanding the representations and feelings of 'urbanness' given to the neighborhood and those who live there.

The guided tours enabled me to have access to a very rich situational context where I got to see not only the symbolic interpretation of the artworks made by the guides but also the public image of Quinta do Mocho that it was hoped would be transmitted based on the regeneration process launched by GAP. The fact that the tours happen every month on set days and times, generally Saturday mornings, was also helpful because I was able to find the guides without making arrangements with them beforehand. I made an effort to make a careful participant observation of those tours, when I recorded audio, took photographs and made notes in the field, experiences that would be further explored in the following days based on the field diary. The conversations with guides during and, most of all, after the tours were valuable. These informal meetings enabled controversial topics to be discussed and elicited critiques of GAP itself. From that immersion in the field, two visions of the urban art project stood out: one 'official', performed in presentations about the area's artworks, and the other 'informal', based on questions from tourists or in the relaxed setting of a conversation. In fact, I sought a view 'from close-up and within' (Magnani, 2002) of the effects of GAP with community guides and residents, which forced me to learn about their experiences and worldviews. This does not mean uncritically reproducing the 'native' viewpoint but transforming that experience of otherness into new knowledge (Magnani, 2009). This opinion is shared by Michel Agier (2011), for whom the rationales of 'making the city', observed ethnographically based on citizens' concrete experiences and their movements through the metropolis, express his proposed anthropology of the city.

After participating in some tours, I focused on the relationship between the community guides and other young people in other dense settings full of sociability and symbolic value: street parties, urban art events and informal meetings in the street or at neighborhood cafés. While the Spot Association was an excellent meeting point, deepening friendship relationships allowed me to seek people out directly at their homes, where we discussed topics that went beyond GAP: life in the neighborhood, migratory journeys, music and art, racism, etc. All the interviews took place at Quinta do Mocho, some of them at the young people's homes and others at quiet places in the area. The in-depth, semi-structured interviews with the two main community guides were important for getting to know their biographical journeys, the complexities of the neighborhood and GAP, as well as the disputes regarding this public policy. In addition, I interviewed another ten people including

community leaders and workers at non-governmental organizations (NGOs), artists and/or Quinta do Mocho residents, along with LMC representatives.

The fact that my young interlocutors live in a municipal neighborhood belonging to LMC, in a situation of certain vulnerability compared to the public power, raised ethical questions for me about how I would describe my observations without harming them. In ethnography, the researcher should become involved with the people he/she studies intimately and respectfully, taking the utmost care not to expose them to compromising situations. I therefore did not use information that could cause problems for the people involved, guaranteeing the right to anonymity whenever necessary. As in the guides' case this was not possible – even if I used fake names, they would always be recognizable – I stepped up those ethical precautions, sharing (and discussing) the text with them before submitting it for publication.

One of the ethnographic discoveries of that research was a tense episode involving residents and LMC when Vhils, a renowned Portuguese artist, was going to paint the face of a young man from the neighborhood called DJ Nervoso. Although I did not witness the scene, I collected statements from the people involved so I could perform a situation analysis of the conflict. The importance of incorporating that analysis in the article is due to the fact that the conflict was an extraordinarily paradigmatic situation illustrating the antagonism and contradictions surround the public policy and it also serves to understand some of its outcomes after the strong position taken by the residents in that episode. Following the teachings of J. Clyde Mitchell (2009), situation analysis is an effective methodological instrument for understanding a broader context, forming an excellent 'window of analysis' for understanding interactions between agents that are positioned unequally in a certain territory.

3. Going into Quinta do Mocho

On the last Saturday of each month, LMC organizes a guided tour of the pieces at Quinta do Mocho open to all those interested in urban art. With the aim of taking part in one of those tours, I went to the Sacavém House of Culture (*Casa da Cultura de Sacavém*), the meeting

point, on a Saturday morning. Surprised by the large number of people, around seventy people, I caught sight of the cicerones Kedy, aged 30, and Kally, aged 37, two of the project's community guides. They were talking with council workers who were directing visitors to the building's entrance. Before the tour, there would be a short speech by the councilor Maria Eugénia Coelho. With the two guides by her side, the councilor reminded the audience of the time when Quinta do Mocho was a collection of unfinished tower blocks surrounded by a shanty town due to the bankruptcy of construction firm J Pimenta. They were occupied, from the 1980s onward, by immigrants from Portuguese-speaking African countries (known as PALOPs, or *Países de Língua Oficial Portuguesa*, in Portuguese), particularly Angola, São Tomé and Príncipe, Guinea-Bissau, and Cape Verde. The councilor highlighted the poor living conditions of that time:

The living conditions were terrible. Every last space was turned into a house and around 3,000 people lived there in very poor conditions. There was an urgent need to resolve the problem. With the Special Rehousing Program, Loures Municipal Council built this neighborhood to rehouse those people. And in 2000-2001, people settled there. [Maria Eugénia Coelho. Field diary – 30 April 2016]

Built on an area close to the former occupied towers, today's Quinta do Mocho is formed of 91 buildings with around 800 apartments. In her address, the councilor highlighted the fact that Quinta do Mocho's residents were 'good people' and 'hard-working', underlining the role played by women (and mothers) in supporting families during the economic crisis. The rise in unemployment from 2009 onward heavily affected the civil construction sector, in which a substantial part of male residents worked. After reporting the neglect of Quinta do Mocho during the previous legislature, the councilor contextualized the intervention of the current LMC, with the emergence of GAP in the area. Maria Eugénia said, regarding the importance of this public policy:

This project alone is very worthwhile because there are more than 51 pieces, but we really want to underline the change that the neighborhood has seen in attitude, in its very physical structures, in the cleanliness that the residents themselves also demand and take part in. In control, in self-control, when young children do something silly,

people don't let them. The pride that we need was actually returned to the neighborhood. [Maria Eugénia Coelho. Field diary – 30 April 2016]

Kally then greeted the audience, speaking with a northern accent about his past as a writer in Porto. Kedy also welcomed the visitors, underscoring 'safety tips' to follow in the neighborhood. He was joking about the stereotypes surrounding Quinta do Mocho, since he was not talking about 'bad things' but instead the care to take regarding traffic in the area's streets. A resident of Quinta do Mocho for 16 years, Kedy talked in a mysterious tone:

We also have a few little surprises here that we decided to bring with us today to help make the project sustainable. This is the first day. We've made some merchandise to help the young people who do the guided tours and also find future solutions for the project, and we'll be showing them to you later. [Kedy. Field diary – 30 April 2016]

4. 'Everything's changed now, we're not a ghetto anymore': Ethnography of the guided tours

Led by Kedy and Kally, we entered Quinta do Mocho on *avenida* Amílcar Cabral avenue, where we saw the image of the African leader covering one of the buildings. Kedy pointed out the importance of this historical figure for all Africans, a reason for pride in a neighborhood where almost all the residents have their origins in that continent. When explaining the impact that the murals had for the people who live there, Kedy reiterated the idea of Quinta do Mocho as a 'problematic neighborhood' marked not only by stigma but by unemployment, poverty and behavioral problems: crime, violence and low self-esteem. Following this example, the GAP project came to 'change the neighborhood's situation', involving a 'transformation and regeneration process'.



Figure 9.1: Amílcar Cabral (Photograph by Otávio Raposo)

One of the emblematic images of Quinta do Mocho can be found in the same street: a black woman taking off a white mask. Created by the artist Nomen, Kally connected this allegory to the stigma the area held and which residents experienced on a daily basis, with a negative effect when job hunting.

This graffiti really represents that: it is the mask. Here in the neighborhood, we are what we are, and when we would leave the neighborhood to look for work, we had to say we were from somewhere else. (...) Out there, we had to say we were from Sacavém, Bobadela or somewhere else. That was the only way we could move on to the next stage in the recruitment process, that was the only way we could get a job, because we could never say we were from here. [Kally. Audio recording – 30 April 2016]



Figure 9.2: The mask (Photograph by Otávio Raposo)

When we go into the square, we see murals of female figures, an homage to the area's women. One of them is 'black Athena', an adaptation of the Greek goddess of wisdom and warfare. Holding a spear with a snake wrapped around it, the figure is accompanied by a reddish owl, attributes relating to Athena. The artist behind the design, a Catalan named Alexis, explained to me months later that his goal was to give the neighborhood a feminine touch without resorting to clichés:

(...) I wanted to draw or represent an idea of... an ideal of a woman that was not an aesthetic ideal of the 21st century, you know? Where she has to have plastic tits, she has to dress a certain way, but rather an icon of a universal woman, in this case the goddess Athena, who for the Greeks was the best-known goddess and represents... could represent beauty or wisdom or warfare or other things...you know? [Alexis. Interview at Quinta do Mocho – 22 June 2016]

Beside this image, the painting of a man playing the piano symbolizes the musical activities present in the neighborhood. This is because Quinta do Mocho 'breathes music', as Kedy (himself a rapper) explains to us, and there are many singers, DJs, producers and dancers.

On the way to the top of the neighborhood we went past a piece by Smile, whose design of a giraffe on the body of a child is impressive in its size and realism. One of the most vigilant creatures in the animal kingdom, the giraffe has the largest heart of all terrestrial animals. These two characteristics inspired Smile, who observed the 'great heart' of Quinta do Mocho's residents, and their sense of caution upon the arrival of outsiders. We all laugh at Kally's explanation, and he mentions the fact that guides always accompany artists when they do their work, and find out the reasons behind each piece. When asked how the themes were chosen, Kally said that artists were given complete freedom to choose as they wished. The same visitor who asked the previous question then asked about how residents participated in the process, and she was given the following reply:

Almost all the artists who come here stay with us. They walk around with us for a couple of days and put something in their painting about that experience. Almost all the artists are inspired to paint by the community. [Kally. Field diary – 30 April 2016]

I would later find out that themes were chosen by the artists often before coming to the neighborhood. They would send a mock-up of the design to LMC so it could be approved (and selected) among other proposals, and the dates of each intervention would be established.

In front of one piece by Vhils - one of the most renowned Portuguese artists - Kedy highlighted that the neighborhood was home to noteworthy producers and DJs of a new electronic rhythm called *batida* (a kind of electronic kuduro with a beat provided by music production software in a fusion of different styles: from funaná to Afro House, from electro music to Afrobeat), whose influence in Lisbon had not gone unnoticed by national and international media. This was the dynamic that inspired Vhils to paint the face of the DJ Nervoso, a decision that did not please a substantial number of the area's young people.

Vhils found out on the internet that there were some young people working with electronic music who are finding success abroad in international magazines such as Rolling Stone, Times and others. Based on the information he gathered about those people, he discovered that DJ Nervoso, a young man who has lived in the neighborhood for many years, was widely admired because he was the one who grew the musical style that is so successful today. And he did the piece based on that. At first, it caused some commotion because people here didn't think that anyone had the right to have their face on a wall. [Kedy. Audio recording - 30 April 2016]

The Bob Marley picture stands out at the top of the neighborhood. Created by Odeith, the mural almost resulted in 'chaos', in the words of one guide, discussing the intimidating action taken by the police when they saw a group of young people watching it be painted.

With the sun directly above our heads, we had a quick break at Elsa, a restaurant enjoyed for its *cachupa* and other delicacies. This was one of the rare moments of interaction between residents and tourists, whose presence was ignored by the few residents walking around the area at that time. While we quenched our thirst, one of the guides spoke about the transformations in the neighborhood that were a result of the murals:

Two or three years ago, you wouldn't come here. Not because you'd be mugged, but because the media told you not to. Everything's changed now, we're not a ghetto any more. [Kally. Field diary – 30 April 2016]

We left the café and saw 'Heron' by Bordalo II, an installation created using scrap found at the junkyard, summarized by Kally as follows: 'Luxury can be made from trash'. We were crossing one of the neighborhood's squares when Kedy pointed out the Catholic church and mosque operating in the same building: 'This is the faith area; the faith and culture area'. We were at the heart of the neighborhood, where a stage set up by the borough council overlooked the many cultural and religious activities that took place there. While the stigmatization of Quinta do Mocho residents has been commonplace, the lack of visibility of their cultural practices that offer them a dignified identity appears to be the other side of the same coin. To work against that trend, Kedy discussed some of the 'neighborhood

talents', from people with higher education to musicians and football players, and then went on to show us the building where the former Sporting player Carlos Mané grew up.

We were shown another piece by Vhils, this time made using a collage of overlapping newspapers and photographs. A large eye dominates the panel, which includes unfinished buildings in an allusion to the former Quinta do Mocho. One of the last pieces discussed during the tour was of a woman, her face covered by a scarf, accompanied by paintbrushes, pencils, pens and spray cans on her back. Made by the artist 'Pinta com que há' (meaning 'Paint with what there is'), it represents the transgressive and clandestine nature of the graffiti world, a situation that Kally links to the criminalization of writers as well as Quinta do Mocho residents:

Here in the neighborhood, we also had to hide ourselves, just like the writers had to use tags so they wouldn't be recognized. [Kally. Field diary – 30 April 2016]

We were on our way back to the House of Culture at the end of the tour when a man asked one of the guides if they received any payment from LMC. The man seemed shocked to find out that they were not paid for the tours they led: 'but you should be paid for that work'. Later on in the conversation, Kedy said:

We're the ones who drive the tours. The knowledge and contributions of young people in the neighborhood are fundamental. The tours began after the art had been here for a year. (...) People see opportunities. It's magic here. [Kedy. Field diary – 30 April 2016]

Without asking for any kind of contribution from visitors, the guides sold magnets and badges with images of the artworks in the neighborhood for two euros. Once they said goodbye to the visitors, they added up and split the money they had made, putting part of it aside to pay to make future products.

5. Disputes about the Vhils piece: When residents want to have an active voice

When talking with Quinta do Mocho residents, we can quickly see that most approved of the murals because they contribute to a positive image of the area. However, residents' participation in GAP is limited. They are not the ones who choose the themes painted on the walls of the buildings where they live, nor were there residents painting or learning to do graffiti at the organized events. The theme is usually chosen by the artists before they have been to the neighborhood, a process which is entirely mediated by LMC. Many residents find out their buildings are going to be painted on the day itself by the noise of the cranes used by the artists. Denied their right to speak, residents' participation in creating the images and symbolism of each piece is therefore quite limited and dependent on the artist's sensitivity in incorporating them in the creative process.

Several residents questioned this reasoning when Vhils was about to draw the face of DJ Nervoso on the façade of one of the buildings in June 2015. Vhils' initial idea was to paint DJ Marfox, slated by the North American magazine *Rolling Stone* as one of the 'ten new artists you need to know in 2014'. This fame did not go unnoticed by Vhils, who wanted to pay homage to Quinta do Mocho with an image of the renowned resident. Marfox did not grow up in the neighborhood and only lived there recently. So he did not think it was fair to have his image transposed to the wall, suggesting instead DJ Nervoso who, as well as growing up in Quinta do Mocho, was one of the forefathers of the music style they championed.



Figure 9.3: DJ Nervoso (Photograph by Otávio Raposo)

Together with staff from LMC and DJs from the neighborhood, Vhils was planning the painting of Nervoso on the wall to start work when some young people came up to him to ask about what would happen. Until then, no one in the neighborhood had been 'distinguished' with their face on the wall, given the GAP principle of allowing only abstract, fictional or historical figures to be shown. The image of Nervoso therefore opened a precedent. As soon as they were told that Nervoso's face would be painted, the young people were outraged, leading to a heated discussion that attracted other residents. They did not think it was fair that the decision had been made without discussing it with residents beforehand: some said that Nervoso was not an uncontentious enough person to have his face shown on the wall, others criticized the sudden 'change in the rules', since the local authority had guaranteed them that they would never use the image of a neighborhood resident.

Hélder was one of the youngsters who were against the picture of Nervoso from the very beginning, and he believed that the episode 'is an example not only of a lack of voice but of their [the local authority's] unwillingness to listen to us'. This confrontation was very clear in his memory:

There were loads of people there, loads of people. Firmino, a guy who's in prison now, asked: 'What's going on here?' 'We're going to paint Nervoso's face'. That caused trouble. 'You guys are going to paint Nervoso's face with whose permission?' 'Who did you ask?' You never asked anyone about anything. We thought that it would be paintings of abstract things, an idea comes into your head and you do it, not painting the faces of people from the area. Because if the idea is to paint the faces of local people, there are people who are more important to us than Nervoso. [Hélder. Interview at Quinta do Mocho – 15 August 2017]

According to Hélder, the people involved did not have any kind of personal issue with Nervoso, some even remembered the parties he ran in the area (DJ Nervoso was one of those involved in the kaduro parties held inside the area's empty shops between 2003 and 2007, giving rise to a booming music scene that decisively contributed to the creation of the

batida style). It was the local authority's lack of sensitivity in failing to hear the residents that produced the revolt, the last straw in a wider build-up of dissatisfaction. The deaths of two local young people, one of whom lived in the building where the mural was to be painted, also stoked tensions.

Faced with a threat to destroy the mural or even burn down the building if the project went ahead, Vhils and the LMC staff members suspended the initiative. They decided to change the original location for the work, shifting Nervoso's image from one of the neighborhood's busiest streets to one of the edges. Vhils' ability to understand the reasons behind the rebellion have been praised by Roberto, aged 27, another young man from Quinta do Mocho:

It was really something! Because imagine having more than a hundred people saying: 'We don't want you to paint! Get out of here!' That's not normal. It was hard for them to hear what they heard, but Vhils was able to understand them. (...) Everyone there, nobody was spared, everyone was insulted at the time. So Vhils... That's when you see who's a big person and who's a small person. [Roberto. Interview at Quinta do Mocho – 9 September 2016]

With the 'wounds' of that episode still open, Vhils suggested a design for the "contentious" wall that told the stories of the neighborhood through photographs of the residents themselves. The new collaborative project was supported by Kedy, who collected the donated photographs. With the old unfinished buildings at the top, the panel contains a large eye with photographs of the residents around it, an initiative that people welcomed.



Figure 9.4: The eye (Photograph by Otávio Raposo)

The limited dialogue the local authority had with Quinta do Mocho residents about the dynamics of GAP is a fundamental part of understanding that revolt. It expressed the dissatisfaction of people who live in a precarious urban setting, marked by silencing and imposition, a situation common to many of those who live in social housing. The position of strength demonstrated by residents in the Vhils episode called attention to their right not only to negotiate and make suggestions but also to question the real benefits that they would get from the urban art project, when there was a series of unresolved grievances which were seen as more urgent: leaks in apartments, mosquito infestations, run-down leisure areas, lack of cleanliness, missing doors at building entrances, no bus running through the neighborhood, etc. This issue was described by Roberto:

That commotion needed to happen for the people who are always in the neighborhood, the unemployed, to claim their rights. And they were right to do so (...). It's nice for the Council people to appear in Público [newspaper], but it makes no difference for the people who live in the neighborhood. People want to have a better life (...). Now there's a bus, there's better access, they clean the area every week. I don't know if you noticed, but there are always people cleaning. They did some draining, but there's still a lot of water underneath the buildings, they have to do more. [Roberto. Interview at Quinta do Mocho – 9 September 2016]

Forced to review some of its normal procedures, LMC enhanced the channels for Quinta do

Mocho residents to participate with the public authority by recruiting young people from the neighborhood to be community guides. The involvement of 'native' operators to promote GAP and resolve any possible problems became essential to the project's effectiveness, as well as providing the Council with excellent mediators with the population.

Community assemblies in Quinta do Mocho also provided a new boost. Residents could use the assemblies to make requests and demand structural improvements that went beyond the artworks. As Kedy explained: 'The Council having to hold community assemblies was the graffiti's greatest victory'. This new joining of forces meant LMC had to meet some of the residents' historical demands. Now there are bus routes running through the neighborhood, doors at building entrances, ramps for disabled people were installed and cleaning services now run more regularly. Several problems persist, however, many of which are the result of the buildings' lack of maintenance, which is made worse by the poor construction quality. One of the worst is currently the large number of mosquitoes in the neighborhood, a result of water leakages in the buildings' basements, which have become great breeding grounds.

6. The leaders of regenerating a neighborhood

Turned into an 'urban art hotspot', with the vast production of large-scale pieces that include the work of the renowned Portuguese urban artists Odeith, Bordalo II, Nomen and Vhils, Quinta do Mocho's external image has changed, partially challenging the stereotype of urban violence associated with it. The change in representations in the media can be seen in the following newspaper and magazine headlines: *Urban Art to recover Quinta do Mocho's image* [*Arte Urbana para recuperar imagem da Quinta do Mocho*] (DN, 2014); A problematic area transformed into a Public Art Gallery [*Um bairro problemático transformado em Galeria de Arte Pública*] (TSF, 2015); The area no-one wants to go into now has 'more visitors than museums' [*O bairro onde ninguém quer entrar já 'recebe mais visitas que os museus'*] (Borges, 2016).

This recognition by the media, however, was highly indebted to the labor of community guides, responsible for enhancing the public visibility of the neighborhood and attracting visitors. The guides' interpretation of the urban art collection that shapes the area is at the

foundation of a process of cultural translation that makes use of street art to deal with the social context of Quinta do Mocho, also addressing the alleged 'regeneration' the neighborhood is undergoing. As one of the guides states about GAP:

It's transformative, it's important, it's inspiring. This neighborhood needed something like that in order to change, it was an opportunity (...). Because there were lots of people who covered themselves with masks, they were embarrassed to go to school and say they were from Quinta do Mocho, they were embarrassed to look for a job since they knew they wouldn't be able to get one because they were from Quinta do Mocho. That stigma was very present. (...) And deep down the negative association is transforming into a positive one. [Kedy. Interview at Quinta do Mocho – 18 April 2016]

The participation of young people from Quinta do Mocho was fundamental to enabling the guided tours and overcoming people's initial misgivings about the project. The tours were carried out intermittently during a first stage and then became regular after the conflicts involving Vhils. It was at that time that the urban art project shifted from 'O bairro i o mundo' to become GAP, when the number of artworks grew exponentially and murals became the favored way of regenerating the neighborhood.

The inclusion of community guides was a key element in reconnecting the urban art project drawn up by LMC by making them the main promoters of the public policy. After a first period to approach and win over young people, their involvement in GAP was founded on taking responsibility in the supposed regeneration process the neighborhood was undergoing. Encouraged to 'do their bit', Kedy and Kally were invited to be community guides, a task that was presented as a civic practice and a chance to transform the neighborhood. However, it also involved providing services to the local authority free of charge, which was euphemistically called 'volunteer work'.

LMC's action follow the recommendations from international organizations like the UN or UNESCO (Souza, 2008), in which 'youth engagement' is one of the foundations of their integration policies. The principle of this is to transform young people into 'protagonists' in

the search for solutions to problems faced in their areas. However, that participation model may cause what Regina Souza believes to be a 'cancellation of the policy' (2008: 12), in that it offers few chances for autonomous and emancipatory discourse. Converted into 'young people-solutions' (Souza, 2008; Tommasi, 2013), their dreams, energies and even rebellions are trapped by management devices (whether public or private) that act on populations in 'social vulnerability' situations, some playing the role of 'mediator' and 'leader' in cultural projects understood as 'community' projects. In fact, the Mocho guides were introduced not just as intermediaries of the local authority but as examples to be followed by other young people and they would embody the successful regeneration process in the neighborhood.

That Kedy was asked to be a community guide is not surprising. He is identified by residents as a community leader and an artist in the hip-hop scene, promoting collective actions through art and association-based activities. Born in São Tomé and Príncipe, Kedy came to Portugal at the age of 16, moving to Quinta do Mocho with his family in 2002 at a time when the rehousing process was still ongoing. The strangeness of leaving a calm country to live in a large metropolis marked the first stages of his adaptation, when he experienced the adversities of residential segregation first hand.

When I got here, the first thing I noticed was: 'Oh, I've left one island to come to another one'. Unfortunately, Quinta do Mocho was an island, there was nothing around it, there was no health center, supermarket, buses didn't come in here, it was really sad. There started to be problems with juvenile delinquency, family breakdown and there were a lot of conflicts. And we had never had problems like that, when we got here we were a bit shocked. [Kedy. Interview at Quinta do Mocho – 20 February 2016]

Joining the 'Império Suburbano' [Suburban Empire] rap collective enhanced Kedy's mediation qualities, encouraging him to go beyond the boundaries of Quinta do Mocho and multiply his friendship networks. As time went by, he would become an example for the young people in Quinta do Mocho, helping set up Associação Jovens Estrelas do Bairro [the Young Stars of the Neighborhood Association]. Kedy recently finished a degree in Chemical Engineering at university, and is looking for a job in this field.

Kally's passion for the world of graffiti was crucial to his becoming a community guide. A Quinta do Mocho resident between 2001 and 2004 and again since 2012, Kally was raised by his grandmother in Porto, where he learned the secrets of graffiti when it was still considered a marginal art form. Born in Angola, his mother brought him to Portugal to escape the civil war when he was four years old. He did not complete his secondary education and has more than ten years' experience working in call centers. This has sharpened his skills as a performer and a promoter. The charisma he transmits to tourists on tours reveals the satisfaction he gets from promoting Quinta do Mocho, a way of fighting the stigma of what is now his home:

I've always found it easy and enjoyed dealing with the public, but I'm not a salesman, I'm a promoter. And promoting my neighborhood brings me a lot of satisfaction. It really satisfies me to change people's awareness, it really satisfies me to start a tour and see that the people at the back are a bit afraid, and when we get to the middle of the tour and those people who were further back are now right at the front. Seeing people's faces change when they come in here a bit suspicious and get to the middle or end of the tour and say that it was one of the best things they'd seen: not just the neighborhood but the way we presented it. [Kally. Interview at Quinta do Mocho – 11 April 2017]

Doing something they like for the neighborhood's benefit was an initial encouragement for Kedy and Kally to agree to be volunteer guides. However, the economic pressure of unemployment and the growing number of guided tours increased the contradictions of not receiving any financial support from the local authority. The situation was even more controversial in Kally's case, since he has a son in his care.

Along with the rhetoric of volunteer work as a way to encourage the 'regeneration of the neighborhood', LMC also required the guided tours to be free to the tourists, since GAP is a social project run by the local authority. The solution for the guides' growing dissatisfaction was to encourage them to become entrepreneurs. Attracted by that discourse, Kedy and Kally created merchandising products to be sold to tourists, a way of getting income and

making the project sustainable. However, the amounts earned from selling the products were not enough to even provide basic sustenance.

Despite all the difficulties, Kedy and Kally still hope to transform the guided tours into a viable employment alternative. This dream is fed by both the pleasure of helping change the neighborhood's image and by the 'feeling of citizenship' (Arantes, 2000: 47) arising from creative work that provides them with some recognition. Disappointed with the bureaucracy and unwillingness of the local authority to change the precarious state in which they found themselves, they began to organize guided tours independently from LMC, charging tourists a small amount. This does not mean they will not carry on cooperating with the local authority, a relationship that is not always harmonious, depending on the way the interests surrounding GAP are disputed.

7. Final remarks

The beneficial effects of GAP in fighting the stigmatization of Quinta do Mocho must be recognized, since the neighborhood has started to be given as an example in the news as a reference for urban art in Portugal and is no longer exclusively connected to themes of violence. Symbolically converted into an area of art and culture, Quinta do Mocho was integrated into the country's tourism routes and visits by people from outside the neighborhood became commonplace. The observations made using the ethnography method revealed, however, that this public policy's attempt to produce new feelings of 'urbanness' in the area is not free from contradictions. The fact that they have not decision-making power over the paths to be followed by the urban art project and other policies that deal with their area is an example of how they are not subjects to be heard, but objects embodied in the discourse. By relegating the residents' priorities to second place, GAP restates their subaltern state, denying them the condition of 'builders of the city' (Holston, 2013: 30). With the revolt surrounding Vhils' painting, the residents demonstrated their dissatisfaction with that subaltern status and took a strong position in an attempt to influence the urban art project in their territory and exercise their 'right to the city' (Lefebvre, 1999). Furthermore, the tours of the neighborhood led by community guides reveal unforeseen uses of the street, claiming 'ways of doing' (Certeau, 1980) that are more

critical, autonomous and sustainable. Both cases highlight the importance of incorporating the sensitivity of those who live in the neighborhood and the need for more democratic public policies. From that viewpoint, the public space of Quinta do Mocho cannot be merely a multicultural setting for tourists to visit, nor should the murals decorate precariousness for residents. As the stage for intense socializations, the neighborhood's streets are privileged areas of memory and affection among residents, where identities and feelings of belonging are built that support their understanding of the world. Incorporating that "experienced" perspective is fundamental for us to gain a more complex view of the public policies in action, a knowledge that demands trusting relationships with the people the researcher observes in situ for long periods of time. That is why ethnography was advantageous in examining GAP, where the focus was on the experiences and voices of residents that emerged from observation, dialogue and collaborations with the researcher.

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