

Slum politics as singular politics: Reflections on citizenship at the margins in Recife, Brazil

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Since the 1980s Recife has a unique participatory slum governance system in place called the PREZEIS (Plan of Regularization of Special Zones of Social Interest). This is a law that defends the right to the city of the urban poor living in *comunidades* (slums) called ZEIS areas. It emerged at the end of the military dictatorship, as the result of a popular movement that included NGOs, the church, slum dwellers and the university. This was a radical transformation aimed at inclusion of the urban poor in governmental politics.

However there is always group, the 'part of no part', the uncounted, that cannot be included as such; the *favela* (de Vries 2016). The *favela* ('real' slum) is a derogatory term used to designate 'invaded' areas characterized by criminality and promiscuity. It is an intimate 'part of no part' of the *comunidade*. Community leaders have ambivalent relations with the *favela*; they come from these areas and claim to represent them, yet at the same time they take personal advantage of this intimate knowledge as savvy political brokers (da Silva 2015).

Within the PREZEIS, elected community leaders may compete and collaborate with the state as they operate in governmental-, electoral- and slum politics; three domains of politics that are different, yet overlapping (Koster and de Vries 2012). They differ in place, time, idiom and gender characteristics. In short, governmental politics consists of (participatory) projects and programs, such as the PREZEIS. Electoral politics comprises the political parties, their networks with the population, and possibilities for community leaders to earn an extra income through campaigning. Finally, slum politics is the politics of the 'part of no part', often (but not always) mediated by community leaders through patron-client relations.

In this paper, based on ethnographic research with community leaders, our focus is on slum politics. Slum politics is the outcome of both outside interventions (electoral and governmental) *and* ambivalent relations between the *comunidade* and the *favela*. In other words, slum politics consists of all three domains, including itself. We argue that slum politics is a singular politics in the sense that it stands for the possibility of emancipatory transformation; a radical event when the *favela* presents itself as was the case during the popular movement of the 1980s (da Silva and de Vries forthcoming). In making this argument we argue that slum politics is the hidden underside of the institutionalized discourse of citizenship and rights (Koster 2014).

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Sven da Silva (1990) graduated 'cum laude' in International Development Studies at Wageningen University (2015). His specialization is in Sociology of Development and Change (SDC). He has conducted ethnographic research with community leaders in Recife (Brazil) during the FIFA Football World Cup; a study for which he received the NALACS Thesis Award 2014-2015. Sven is an external-PhD candidate in Wageningen at the SDC department. He combines this with his position as a researcher and project assistant at the Radboud University, Nijmegen, within the project "Participatory urban governance between democracy and clientelism: brokers and (in)formal politics". The name of his PhD project is "Planners, Community leaders, and Participation: An in-depth comparative theorization of Slum Politics in Recife, Brazil"

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