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PLANNING FOR PROTEST: THE SPATIAL DIMENSIONS OF CIVIL RESISTANCE MOVEMENTS IN RIO DE JANEIRO, BRAZIL

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**PLANNING FOR PROTEST:
THE SPATIAL DIMENSIONS OF CIVIL RESISTANCE MOVEMENTS IN RIO
DE JANEIRO, BRAZIL**

by

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B. A. INTERNATIONAL STUDIES AND GEOGRAPHY

THESIS

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ABSTRACT

This research project seeks to better understand how protests of varying sizes take place in public spaces, focusing on the city of Rio de Janeiro. The relationship between cities and protests has increasingly gained importance as urban areas throughout the world become epicenters for demanding greater political rights and expanded notions of citizenship (Harvey, 2003) (Vicino, 2017). Understanding the dynamics of protest in Rio de Janeiro is particularly important as the city struggles to overcome a financial crisis following nearly a decade of hosting international mega-events including the 2016 Olympics. Unstable funding has led to a public security crisis as the city grapples with a surge in criminal violence and a national corruption scandal. The combination of these problems has placed enormous pressure on civil society to stand up against injustice and communicate demands from the most underrepresented sectors of society. Protests are an essential tool of civil society, but their effectiveness often depends on the ability to access and move through urban spaces. Using qualitative data from interviews with activists and the distribution of an online survey, I evaluate how space matters for protests in Rio. This

paper explores the different strategies used to perform protests in public spaces, overcome spatial challenges or restrictions, and communicate messages of dissent.

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Chapter I: Does Space Matter for Rio's Activists?

“Change Life! Change Society! These precepts mean nothing without the production of an appropriate space” – Henri Lefebvre in *The Production of Space* (1974)

“...vamos colocar um ponto final em todas as formas de ativismo no Brasil” (“we will put an end to all forms of activism in Brazil”) – Jair Bolsonaro, PSL candidate for President, 2018

Every February the city of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil prepares for their largest event of the year, *carnaval*, and the city temporarily stops their normal routine to participate in the revelry. The most iconic part of the celebrations take place at the *sambódromo*, which is a monolithic concrete amphitheater stretching nearly half a mile long with capacity for 90,000 spectators while millions watch the event broadcasted nationally and internationally. The highly competitive *escolas da samba* (samba schools) showcase their carefully designed 80-minute samba performance which they begin rehearsing for a year in advance and usually involve the participation of a minimum of 2,000 performers per school (Fabiano, 2018). This year, a little-known samba school called Paraíso de Tuiuti, considered the underdog of the competitive event, shocked the city and the entire country with a riveting performance that took aim at the country's painful history and difficult political present. The parade's theme song was entitled “My God, my God, is slavery extinct?” and depicted the country's turbulent and horrendous history in chronological order, opening with dancers portraying slaves in shackles with muzzles and scars from whips (Kaiser, 2018). The next float included a giant book representing what is often referred to as the “Golden Law” which abolished slavery in Brazil in 1888 (the last country in the Americas to do so) (Garcia-Navarro, 2013). The book was then followed by a group of dancers with costumes that had miniature representations of shantytown-

like homes hoisted upon their backs, depicting the numerous *favelas* where liberated slaves settled after abolition on the outskirts of major cities. Favelas (now popularly referred to in Brazil as *comunidades* meaning communities) still contain majority black and mixed-race populations (Kaiser, 2018). Another group of dancers followed with costumes representing more modern-day rural workers who even today often work under slave-like conditions. The next scene involved a massive group of dancers with costumes depicting the small carts that thousands of street vendors use to sell miscellaneous items to support their often-perilous lives. As the samba theme song continued with powerful lyrics repeating “I am a slave to no one”, a group of dancers emerged wearing costumes with multiple arms holding different tools, meant to symbolize the daily struggles of the working class. These dancers also held massive and tattered versions of Brazil’s official employment cards, a visual that was meant to criticize recent policies that restrict labor rights and raise the national retirement age (Kaiser, 2018).

The last two sections of the parade proved to be the most controversial. The dancers were dressed in green, yellow, and blue clothes, the national colors of Brazil’s flag, evoking the right-leaning protesters of 2015 that took to Brazil’s streets to call for the impeachment of left-wing President Dilma Rousseff. The floats or *trios electricos* that surrounded the dancers held giant puppet strings above the dancers who were referred to as “manifestoches”—a fusion of the Portuguese words for “protester” and “puppet”, suggesting that the wave of protests in 2015 was merely orchestrated by conservative forces hoping to gain more power (Kaiser, 2018). Dancers dressed as wolves disguised as sheep followed the manifestoches with paper money falling out of their suit pockets, meant to represent the current cadre of corrupt Brazilian politicians. But it was the finale

of the protest that stirred the most criticism and praise. The last float was topped with a man impersonating the country's President Michele Temer as a "neoliberal vampire" dressed in a tuxedo and the iconic presidential sash. The vampire wore a cape with a collar that was made of U.S. dollar bills, taking aim at Temer's various corruption charges since he took power after Rouseff's impeachment. After the first performance, the samba school was soon pressured to remove the Presidential sash from the vampire Temer character during the finale winner's parade event (Redação RBA, 2018). Despite the controversy, the performance received enormous praise and the little-known newcomer samba school managed to secure second place in the difficult competition, losing first place by just a tenth of a point (Kaiser, 2018). Regardless of the loss, many Brazilians felt that the performance perfectly captured the current political atmosphere of the country and managed to use the enormously symbolic space of the sambódromo to send a direct message to the country's political leadership (Kaiser, 2018).

Although carnival celebrations have historically involved politics (Pravaz, 2006), this year's event perfectly highlighted the creativity of Brazilian protests and the way in which formal and informal activists artfully communicate political messages and demands. Of course, not all protests have the advantage of performing on such an elevated platform that is covered by numerous media outlets. Most protests take place in various types of public spaces and confront an assortment of challenges in communicating their demands, attracting attention, or gaining more participants for their cause. This research project seeks to better understand how activists organize and perform protests in public spaces, focusing especially on the city of Rio de Janeiro. The relationship between cities and protests has increasingly gained importance as urban

areas throughout the global north and south become epicenters for demanding greater political rights and expanded notions of citizenship (Harvey, 2003; Vicino, 2017).

Understanding the dynamics of protest in Rio de Janeiro is particularly important right now as the city struggles to overcome a financial crisis following nearly a decade of hosting international mega-events including the 2016 Olympics. Unstable funding has also led to a public security crisis as the city grapples with a surge in criminal violence and a national corruption scandal brought on by the Rio-based, state-owned oil company, Petrobras. In 2016 the state government declared a state of financial emergency and since then, many social services, schools, and hospitals have suffered budget cuts (Leahy and Schipani, 2017). The combination of these problems has placed enormous pressure on civil society to stand up against injustice, call out corrupt and unfair policies, and communicate demands from the most underrepresented sectors of society.

An important part of any civil society organization's strategy is to protest in public to send their message of dissent, inform the public of an injustice or cause, and communicate with the state. To do this, activists must use public spaces in urban areas including plazas, parks, city squares, streets, highways, or any other open spaces. The motivation for this research is to better understand how the physical form of these spaces impact events of civil expression and how activists use space to their advantage (or disadvantage). Protests in public spaces are an essential tool of civil society but their effectiveness often depends on their ability to access and move through public urban spaces. Using a case group of activists in Rio de Janeiro, this paper explores how activists employ different strategies to perform protests in public spaces, overcome spatial challenges or restrictions, and communicate their messages of civil disobedience. The

two guiding research questions for the project are: Do activists encounter spatial vulnerabilities or geographic challenges to best express their messages of dissent? What strategies do they use to overcome these challenges and/ or better communicate with their targeted audience? To answer these questions, I interviewed 7 activist leaders from 5 different organizations or coalition groups. I also developed an online survey that mirrored the interview questions and sent it out to about 4 different organizations. My survey and interview questions focused on understanding where the groups locate the protest and the reasons why they choose these sites, the challenges that they may face to organize effectively in these places, and the techniques they use during the protest to send their message. The previous literature on social change that guided my research includes the political opportunity paradigm which theorizes that political environments shape the ability of civil society to make demands and enact change over time (McAdam, Tarrow, Tilly, 2001: 16), and the resource mobilization theory that states that the effectiveness of activism depends on the variety of resources available (Jasper, 1997: 24). Since this project focuses exclusively on non-violent protests, theories on the strategic advantages to using non-violent techniques (Sharp, 1993; Chenoweth and Stephan, 2011) also guided this research. To better understand the importance of space, I referred to previous theories on the relationship between power and space (Lefebvre, 1991; Gareth, 1994) and the dynamics in which people interact or try to have a voice within the public sphere (Low and Smith, 2006; Fraser, 1990). Lastly, the project was informed by the history of states and cities manipulating the urban landscape to better suppress dissent (Harvey, 2012; Lynch, 1981), and the various ways in which this practice has continued into the present (Mitchell and Staeheli, 2005), especially in the Brazilian context (Caldeira, 2015;

Holston, 2014).

The major findings from the research indicate that the interviewed groups use space strategically to target important audiences, perform protest in symbolic ways to represent the group's mission, and employ different spatial strategies to encourage participation, avoid repression and broaden their bases of support. A broad theme that emerged throughout the research is that the uneven and segregated geography of Rio presents a difficult challenge for activists to reach different audiences and attract and maintain a diverse support base. The interviewed groups demonstrate that they use space in creative ways to overcome these geographic challenges but are ultimately limited from reaching target audiences of would-be supporters. The interviewed and surveyed groups show several unique strengths of their approach to activism including their ability to organize as coalitions, their ability to make participation easier, the use of space to send strong messages, and the way in which they organize both proactive and reactive protests. The main weaknesses of their approach that I observed include: the lack of use of simultaneous and dispersed protests and inattention to the group's spatial vulnerabilities and insecurities during marches in high traffic areas.

The second chapter of the paper reviews the extensive literature on theories of protest, the importance of urban settings, the history of Brazilian civil society and current challenges facing activists in Rio. The third chapter reviews the research methodology used for interviewing and surveying activists, organizers, and urban planners. The fourth chapter analyzes the qualitative information gathered from the interviews and survey, followed by the concluding chapter that highlights the major patterns observed and how this research may support future urban social movements and the urban planners that

create space for them. I also discuss ways that this project can be continued and improved upon in the future.

CHAPTER II: CITIES, PUBLIC SPACES, AND PROTEST

This research aims to fill a gap in the social movement literature by examining the socio-spatial characteristics of protests in Rio de Janeiro and how urban space affects the abilities of protesters to stake claims and make demands. The review of literature that supports this research is divided into four sections, beginning with a general overview on theories of social change, the role of cities as settings for protest around the world, issues surrounding public space in the Latin American context, and finally the theory and history of protest specific to Rio de Janeiro. The last two sections provide information on the larger context of Brazilian civilian society and the challenges that activists in Rio currently face. Lastly, I discuss public space policies in Rio and the ways that certain populations have been restricted from accessing these areas, providing a framework for understanding the contentious geography of the city.

Theories of Social Change

There is a vast literature that seeks to understand why people protest, the characteristics of civil resistance, and its eventual or immediate effects on the state. Social movement theories in the first half of the 20th century hypothesized that collective behavior was a random, un-institutionalized action that was driven by irrational mass psychology (Tilly, 1998: 454). Indeed, many societies around the world did not regard protest as a noble or useful course of action. Until the second half of the 20th century, many cultures viewed protest as an irregular activity, carried out by individuals who were prone to violence and even pathological activity. This was based on the view that protest could occur in any society where individuals become unattached to their community or

work (Jasper; 1997: 21). According to the collective behavior theory of social change, protests occur due to moments of sheer irrationality that transform into moments of collective creativity (Jasper, 1997: 23). Related to collective behavior, the crowd-based tradition of protest viewed protesters as deviants but also as capable of addressing larger social problems and not just acting to serve their own interests. As a positive result of protest, new ideas and actions emerge over time. This paradigm presented a new theory of social change, which could occur only through face-to-face interactions and community-based activities and not through fleeting encounters (Jasper, 1997: 22-23). By the second half of the 20th century, perceptions of social movements changed as societies and leading thinkers began to regard protest as the result of an “uncertainty about reality” (Jasper; 1997: 21) that would lead to crowds working together in creative ways to produce new understandings. During this era, social movements transformed from focusing on issues related to distributive politics and improved working conditions to topics related to culture, identity and lifestyle. Social movements also began organizing differently and became more diverse by focusing on increasing participation, utilizing non-hierarchical organizational structures, and practicing inclusive democracy to govern themselves (Habermas, 1981; Edwards, 2009).

Over time, theories of social change shifted their focus to determine what motivates individuals to join movements. Scholars used the rational choice theory to predict that people would join a protest only after an evaluation of the expected benefits or costs to doing so. Despite the severity of the grievances that motivate protesters, under the rational choice theory, individuals will only join a protest if they have some expectation that the action will diminish the grievance (Opp, 2013: 3). The theory also

predicts that individuals will join protests if they perceive the group as effective, although individuals often overestimate the influence of their group and of their own involvement. However, for many movements the efficacy of the group is dependent on individual participation, suggesting that if the grievance is strong enough, individuals will participate in the action. Lastly, rational choice theory highlights the importance of social networks and states that if an individual is part of a network where protest is a norm and an expected activity, individuals will join protests due to obligation (Opp, 2013: 3-4).

In contrast to rational choice, the mobilization paradigm states that the success of civil resistance movements depends on the availability and accessibility of different resources at the time of action, which ultimately affects what protesters can achieve. These resources include economic and physical capital, moral resources such as broad support for a goal, well developed organizational strategies or social networks, and human resources including volunteers and leaders (Jasper, 1997: 24). Under this view, protests are a regular part of politics and protesters are rational actors with reasonable goals. This paradigm recognizes that all groups in a society have interests and rights to advance but tends to ignore other important factors that motivate groups to act such as emotions while overly exaggerating the importance of strategic decisions (McAdam, Tarrow, Tilly, 2001: 16) (Jasper, 1997: 24).

The last theory that helped to define how social change occurs is political opportunity or process. Under this paradigm, political environments over time shape social movements and their capacity to enact change. Social movements adapt to and/or make claims within the cultural and political circumstances of the time which affect the kind of available opportunities for them to successfully make claims (McAdam, Tarrow,

Tilly, 2001: 16). Political environments also affect how social movements frame their demands, their identities as activists, and the forces that may oppose them (McAdam, Tarrow, Tilly, 2001: 16). These foundational theories of social change apply to this research project in various ways. However, the political opportunity paradigm provides the best framework for this research project as I will discuss further in chapter four.

Another aspect to understanding how social change occurs is recognizing the guiding principles that shape acts of civil resistance. While some groups utilize violent tactics to make their demands on the state, other groups abide by the principles of non-violent mobilization. This research focuses exclusively on non-violent activist groups. The most well-known theorist of non-violent mobilization is Gene Sharp who detailed the advantages of non-violent struggle in his book *From Dictatorship to Democracy* (1993). In it, he points out that non-violent political defiance is uniquely able to utilize a society's groups and institutions to end the domination by a few (Sharp, 1993: 29-30). He partly attributes this to the fact that with non-violent action, there will always be fewer numbers of casualties compared to violent action and because of this, non-violent actions will help people to lose their fear of the repressive government, allowing for greater number of participants (Sharp, 1993: 33). Notably, Sharp criticizes the tendencies of non-violent campaigns to only rely on one or two methods of resistance, instead of employing several of the 198 different types of methods that he lists in the book's appendix (Sharp, 1993: 31). He encourages non-violent activists to strategically plan their actions and consider various factors including the resources available to them, the types of symbolism that will best mobilize the population, and which areas of the repressive government should be targeted, among many other considerations (Sharp, 1993: 51).

More recent theories have continued to favor nonviolent campaigns for their superior ability to attract a greater number of participants to join their movements (Chenoweth and Stephan, 2011: 10). This is primarily due to the low physical, informational, and moral barriers to participating in non-violent mobilizations. Physical barriers include the difficulties that participants would experience to participate in the action, which may include endurance, agility, and the willingness or ability to handle weapons (Chenoweth and Stephan, 2011: 33). For non-violent mobilizations, however, the physical barriers are greatly reduced and only require, in most cases, the physical presence of participants in a certain location. Informational barriers refer to the challenges that movements face in advertising their goals or demands to potential participants. Violent groups most often need to remain underground and secretive to achieve their goals, but non-violent groups have an advantage in their ability to openly recruit and advertise to members (Chenoweth and Stephan, 2011: 33-34). Moral barriers include the unwillingness that participants may exhibit to engage in civil disobedience of both violent and non-violent forms. But violent actions present many more moral barriers to people and requires participants to make a significant commitment and take great risks to themselves, their families, and livelihoods (Chenoweth and Stephan, 2011: 34). In most circumstances, rational individuals will be more inclined to march in the streets rather than pick up arms to resist the state. Attracting a broad base of membership is critical to the success of social movements, especially to defend against repressive state actions (Chenoweth and Stephan, 2011: 11). Once non-violent movements gain a large number of participants, they become more resilient, draw on more strategic resources and tactics, and improve their capacity to cause civil disruption (Chenoweth and Stephan,

2011:10-11).

Opinions differ on what motivates citizens to speak up, organize, and express dissent, but nearly all agree that the public dimension of social movements is crucial to make dissent visible and change policy or public opinion. The spaces used for these actions and the cities that surround them, are of critical importance to the effectiveness of protests. The next section will review the literature that examines the urban context of civil resistance movements, and the relationship between city and protest.

Cities as the setting for protest

Cities and protests are intimately connected. Historically, the form of urban areas has been closely linked to political maneuvers to control populations, discourage or squash dissent, and foster loyalty to the state. The classical form of Western cities in the ancient world nearly always included some form of defensive measure to protect against either internal or external enemies (Lynch, 2004). Defensive measures were critical to the survival of urban areas. In the historical theory of the city, urban areas could survive the long-term, continue to grow, and remain durable only if they retained their viability (Lynch, 1981: 328). To sustain this, political powers often sought to reorganize urban infrastructure and urban life in ways that would allow them to better control restive populations (Harvey, 2012: 117). The most often cited example of this type of control is post-revolutionary Paris, where Baron Haussmann, appointed by Emperor Napoleon III, replaced the medieval narrow streets of the city with wide boulevards designed to fit military operations in case of another citizen rebellion. A more modern and diffuse example is the re-engineering of American cities following the uprisings of the early

1960's after which city planners used extensive networks of raised highways to separate high property value neighborhoods from struggling low-income neighborhoods (Harvey, 2012: 117).

Some recent international examples of how urban design controls populations include cases in Bahrain and Myanmar. During the height of the Arab Spring in March 2011, the Bahraini government shifted their response to popular uprisings and targeted the Pearl roundabout, a traffic circle which was a previously underused feature in the city's landscape (McEvers, 2012; Chulov, 2011). Police forcibly and violently removed protesters and the tents from the roundabout. Later, the Bahraini security forces were ordered to go a step further and demolish the Pearl statue (a 300-foot sculpture), level a mound of grass that had served as the main gathering place and rip up all the remaining infrastructure of the square. This action was explained to the public as an attempt to "boost the flow of traffic" (Bronner, 2011) but in fact demonstrated the regime's desire to erase all physical trace of the uprising and remove the space as a place for public gathering. The three-hour demolition took place at the same time as two protesters, who had been shot earlier in the week by police, were buried in villages outside of the capital (Chulov, 2011). The removal of protesters and the strategic destruction of the Pearl roundabout clearly shows the goal of the Bahraini government to assert their rule over the country by demonstrating their control over the physical landscape of the city.

Another example of this type of manipulation of space is in Myanmar, where in 2005 the military government moved the country's capital from Yangon to Naypyitaw, a city intentionally designed to prevent dissent and sustain the military government. The new city is devoid of almost any public space to discourage public gatherings and lacks

any sort of downtown center. Instead, the city is based on the principles of strict modernist design, seen in other cities such as Brasilia, where the urban landscape is separated into different uses. The hotel zone, for example, is separate from the residential zone, which is separate from the military zone and a government zone, all spaced apart by at least a few kilometers making regular pedestrian access nearly impossible. Highways linking the zones are up to eight lanes in width, purposefully designed to allow military small aircraft to land and take-off. The very location of the city seems to be strategic, located in an isolated part of the country about 300 km from Yangon, allowing the military to comfortably retain power at a distance even if other cities erupt in protest (Varadarajan, 2007). These cases from Bahrain and Myanmar serve as stark examples of the way in which authoritarian governments utilize urban planning as a tool to repress dissent and maintain their grip on power. The characteristics of a site, and its re-engineering by leaders in power are used in political struggles in the same way that the re-shaping of a particular terrain affects a military's ability to win in battle (Harvey, 2012: 118).

To counteract this long history of governments manipulating space to control populations, there is also an extensive history of social movements forming within cities and motivated by urban problems. The influential urban philosopher Henri Lefebvre understood well that revolution almost always contains urban elements which at the time contradicted his colleagues in the French communist party who believed that only the factory-based, more rural proletariat could ignite revolutions (Harvey, 2012: xiii). But Lefebvre insisted that the long history of class-based struggles in urban areas, initiated in every region of the world, made evident the crucial link between cities and revolution

(Harvey, 2012: 115; Harvey, 2012: 25). Often, revolution takes place not just in individual urban centers but manages to sustain itself by spreading through a network of cities within a nation and sometimes across national borders (Harvey, 2012: 116). Marxian urban theory was one of the first schools of thought to define city form as both “the product and the producer of conflict and control” (Lynch, 2004). Marxian urban theorists such as David Harvey point out that in recent years, urban social movements have managed to both rise and fall rapidly, quickly losing their influence after brief days of protest (the 2006 immigrant rights struggle in the U.S.) or eventually burning out and lacking any long-term durability (Occupy Wall Street movement of 2011) (Harvey, 2012: 2018). To counteract this, social movements must reflect more on their urban environments and recognize that their unifying demand is a struggle to reclaim the city from its “bourgeoisie appropriation” and to liberate workers from abuse or oppression (Harvey, 2012: 120).

The spaces that host protest are often shaped by urban planners and architects who develop city plans and design buildings that reflect local lifestyle, culture, and economic capital. However, these plans and designs also explicitly or implicitly express power, hierarchies, and often seek to inspire admiration or intimidation (Hatuka, 2018: 6). Because of this, public spaces within cities express a particular message of power from the state and often serve to maintain the power of the state (Hatuka, 2018: 6). Activists perform protest or structure their protests in such a way to strike up a dialogue with the inherent expression of power of public spaces. They are well-informed actors who plan spatial choreography and manipulate symbols to communicate with the state and with the broader public and challenge the previously agreed upon meaning of the

space in question (Hatuka, 2018: 273). The way that activists plan their collective action specifically counters or targets the implied representation of a building, institution, or public space (Hatuka, 2018: 40).

Cities and the spaces within them present various benefits and challenges for hosting different types of civil resistance acts. For example, protests located within city squares or plazas benefit from having a highly controlled inner space within which to perform their event. The enclosed space of a square can also create a sense of ritual or solidarity and unite participants even from disparate backgrounds. Indeed, the civic square is the closest equivalent to a “holy” place in modern urban areas (Hatuka, 2018: 33). But central squares are usually designed to communicate a concentration of power within a city and are often surrounded by state institutions. Actions that take place in squares symbolically communicate with the ruling power and challenge the distance between government and people (Hatuka, 2018: 33). Protests in squares can be highly structured events that capture the public’s attention and draw on the symbolic characteristics of the place (Hatuka, 2018: 35). Planners and architects often use several design elements in squares that serve to position individuals within a particular social hierarchy (for example the use of scale, symmetry, monumental buildings or symbolic icons). Protests in squares often explicitly challenge these imposed hierarchies (Hatuka, 2018: 36).

Protests that take place along streets encounter an entirely different set of benefits and challenges. Streets are distinct from civic squares in that they are highly functional spaces that are essential to the operation of any urban area, serving as the framework for the distribution of land and the movement of traffic and people. In this way, streets re the

“socioeconomic veins” of the city and because of this, protests in streets are often more visually dynamic because they incorporate movement (Hatuka, 2018: 35). For protests located in streets, the amount of physical distance is both a symbolic and logistical consideration, enabling more participants and a bigger audience if the protest takes place along a long avenue or boulevard and if the movement can temporarily block the street’s normal function (Hatuka, 2018: 35). A crucial benefit of protesting in the street is that movements can often gain participants along the way as opposed to civic squares which only allow for static action (Hatuka, 2018: 38).

Overall, cities serve as important settings for protests and shape the way that activists plan and perform acts of civil resistance. To narrow this analysis further, the next section will present literature on public spaces within cities, the attempts to limit free expression within them, and the role that these spaces play in facilitating civil society to influence government.

Public Space Theories and the Latin American Regional Context

Theories abound on the meaning, use, and creation or destruction of public space within urban areas. Indeed, urban space is continually contested and urban citizens experience space in different ways. Furthermore, the meaning of space is constantly reproduced and contested, and does not remain consistent (Gareth, 1994: 8). Perhaps the most foundational theorist on urban space is Henri Lefebvre whose work argues that space reflects social domination and actors gain power by occupying space (Gareth, 1994: 1). Lefebvre advocated for a less rigid conceptualization of space as a purely physical, geometrical concept to a more socially informed conceptualization. He

predicted that space would increasingly serve a more important role in modern societies, given that in his view, groups and classes within society cannot form an identity for themselves or recognize one another, unless they create or produce a space for themselves (Lefebvre, 1991: 416). He explains that throughout history, each society developed according to its own means of production and it was these means that then shaped the spaces of that society (Lefebvre, 1991: 412). These means of production include violent means, such as wars or revolutions, political or diplomatic means, or through labor (Lefebvre, 1991: 412).

Importantly, Lefebvre writes that no single agency, force, or organization is capable of producing space at any scale. Instead, these entities contend with one another within local or regional spaces, and it is these interactions that help to produce space (Lefebvre, 1991: 412). A space that becomes politicized is especially powerful for its ability to counter or even destroy the political conditions that originally created it. The way in which political spaces are managed or occupied can contradict the state and its agenda, and in the process call for a different type of management or even self-management (Lefebvre, 1991: 416). Space is powerful, on a worldwide scale, for its ability to exacerbate any existing conflict in the political arena and in the process, promote a critique of the current political situation (Lefebvre, 1991: 416).

This is a crucial lens with which to examine space. Historically, social relations were invented and reproduced, and identities were created in public space. But perhaps the most important characteristic of public space is that it is where power is both exercised or opposed. Urban planning agencies and ministries, and the branches of government they occupy, have the power to influence how power is exercised within

public space. There are countless examples of the way in which planners have exercised social and political control through space, particularly in Latin America where the colonial legacy of rigid social and political hierarchies continues into the present. In late 20th century Brazil, for example, political elites attempted to display national progress by transforming the urban landscape of the country. Most often this involved the demolition of colonial houses and narrow streets and alleyways in favor of wide boulevards and grand statues imported from Europe (Gareth, 1994: 7). The agendas of planning ministries often have less to do with making physical ‘improvements’ to the landscape but are attempts to assign a designated meaning for the built environment of the city (Gareth, 1994: 8).

Many studies have continued Lefebvre’s tradition of understanding the public-sphere as both a physical and social concept, as spaces where power is both contested socially and displayed physically (Barnett, 2008; Low and Smith, 2006: 155). Indeed, the public sphere is created in public spaces where the voices and bodies of diverse citizens are (ideally) recognized and included (Low and Smith, 2006: 157). Democratic politics constantly evolve in these spaces where dissent is made visible and the public sphere is continually challenged by diverse publics and “counter-publics” (Fraser, 1990; Low and Smith, 2006: 156). The constant negotiation between these various publics as well as between public and private spheres, is regulated by social movements, government officials, and the police and the accommodations made by each entity.

In this way, acts of dissident in public space play a crucial role in balancing power in democratic societies. Theoretically, under liberal democracies, dissent is tolerated and ideally welcomed. Under such systems protest is not an act of resistance in and of itself.

Comparatively, under authoritarian governments, dissidence is an outright act of defiance and a rejection of the existing political system (Mitchell and Staeheli, 2005: 799). The challenge facing liberal democracies is to determine how to open space for dissent (and how much) so that acts of dissent produces action that improves, rather than destroys, the state. In this way, the liberal state seeks to shape dissent rather than squashing it outright (Mitchell and Staeheli, 2005: 799).

Throughout the last decade, however, even liberal democracies have created ways to limit and control protest under the guise of shaping it. One of the clearest examples of these efforts is the protest permit system in the U.S. and specifically in the city of Washington, D.C. By documenting and observing protests in the city throughout a five-year period, researchers Don Mitchell and Lynn Staeheli found that the more controversial protests, or those that explicitly criticized current policies, would often face more challenges in securing a permit to use public space and experience more police control. The protesters would face two major challenges of not only securing a permit but also securing a place to protest where the police would not limit their movement and activity. In effect, the permit system in the U.S. creates a “restricted geography of protest” (Mitchell and Staeheli, 2005: 809). Because of this, the researchers observe a larger pattern emerging in which urban public spaces are increasingly characterized by the corralling of protesters, and physical characteristics such as fences, checkpoints, designated “no protest zones”, and even “protest pens” where leaders of movements or other important players are detained temporarily (Mitchell and Staeheli, 2005: 811). In this way, even under liberal democracies, policies that incorporate dissent can quickly break down, and even the pretense of tolerating protests seems to be disappearing

(Mitchell and Staeheli, 2005: 811).

In the Latin American context, public space is closely intertwined with the history of protest (Rosenthal, 2000: 33). In terms of the availability of public space, North America and South America have experienced somewhat different patterns of development. In North America, the amount of public space greatly decreased in the second half of the 20th century. Researchers have cited a variety of factors for this including the proliferation of automobiles, the rise of suburbanization, consumerism, and even television (Rosenthal, 2000: 35-36). These same factors did not have such a pronounced effect on public space in Latin America as the region possesses several features that have traditionally protected public spaces. These include plaza-centered grid city plans in many cities, widely used public transportation systems, a cultural interest in preserving historic center-city zones, cafe-oriented societies (rather than TV-oriented commuters), and different customs regarding time and scheduling (more breaks in the workday and generally more leisure time) (Rosenthal, 2000: 37). However, the region has also faced serious threats to its public spaces throughout its turbulent history. After the destructive and nationalist wars that swept Latin America in the 19th century, many countries began projects to redesign their capital cities using Paris as the model. This involved demolition on a massive scale to replace older working-class housing with institutional buildings designed in French and Italian architectural styles (Rosenthal, 2000: 44).

In the next century, the region faced a right-wing conservative takeover where nearly every country fell under the control of repressive military dictatorships (Kornblith, 2015). During this time, the amount of public spaces diminished seemingly overnight

through swift top-down policies that shaped urban landscapes with little to no regard for public opinion. Between 1962 and 1978, dozens of low-income areas in the city center were forcibly relocated to distant housing projects, causing the dislocation of tens of thousands of residents (McCann, 2014: 5). Many observers of this period describe the main goals of military dictatorships were to destroy politics, eliminate public space, and erase memory (Rosenthal, 2000: 54). However, the dictatorships were not successful in completely discouraging the use of public space, but instead inspired new and creative, if limited, forms of exercising dissent, including through street theater, coordinating protests within the private sphere, or creative non-violent campaigns such as whistling protests meant to humiliate the police (Rosenthal, 2000: 55).

Another important factor that sets Latin America apart in its approach to public space is the region's ability to foster and maintain well-developed collective memories which integrate public sites into local histories. These collective memories have been shaped by eras of repression including during the military dictatorships which often located their torture centers in downtown central areas of cities (Rosenthal, 2000: 55; Weschler 1990: 128). This quickly became public knowledge and fostered a climate of fear and a retreat into the private sphere for a wide section of urban populations. However, by the 1980's the region shifted to policies of political moderation and the hemisphere became increasingly hospitable to democracy (Kornblith, 2015). Today, the collective memories of urban societies in Latin America serve to recognize the important effect that public spaces have on city life. In turn, local governments are more motivated to invest in public spaces, which not only preserves them but ensures they will be continually used by the public (Rosenthal, 2000: 37). In this way, collective memory is

closely intertwined with the exercise of public space in the Latin American context (Rosenthal, 38-39). The next section of this chapter narrows the analysis from the regional context of Latin America to examine Brazil and the city of Rio de Janeiro specifically.

Local Context: Civil Resistance and Public Space in Rio de Janeiro

The second section of the literature review first provides a brief overview of the history of civil resistance movements throughout Brazil and how they developed in the wake of the dictatorship. The next two subsections then narrow the analysis to look specifically at the challenges that social movements in Rio face today and how protests play out in the city's public spaces. The last subsection describes how local policies have influenced the use of public space in general and questions if these spaces are really as public as they are officially deemed to be. This contextual information frames the qualitative data gathered from the interviews so that the reader can better understand the political, economic, and social environments in which activists operate. The context of local space in Rio and the history of how it has been produced, contested, and used by activist groups is important for understanding how activists protest and why the use of public space continues to be a contentious issue in Rio de Janeiro today.

Civil resistance movements in Brazil

Brazil has a vocal and diverse civil society, bolstered by its renowned experiments in participatory governance and subsequent increasing levels of political

participation (Avritzer, 2017). These characteristics are especially notable in a country that recently returned to democracy in 1985 after a 20-year military dictatorship that prohibited any form of protest or civic organizing (Skidmore, 1988). Before the dictatorship, Brazilian civil society in the 1950's was characterized by small local neighborhood organizations which formed to encourage support for populist governments and mobilize support for clientelist politicians (Friendly, 2016: 220). In the 1960's these neighborhood organizations began to shift their discussions toward a focus on urban reform and calling for greater social justice in cities. However, just as this type of neighborhood level activism began to gain its footing, the 1964 military coup occurred and quickly put an end to any form of activism against the state (Friendly, 2016: 220). Despite the repression of the military dictatorship, the ecclesiastical base maintained community mobilization throughout the country. Communities and religious leaders engaged in activities that helped neighborhoods to organize themselves and disseminate ideals of equality and citizenship. These small local groups drew on their collective experience of marginalization and abandonment by the state and began to challenge the problems they faced concerning access to land, lack of housing, and civil rights (Friendly, 2016: 220).

The largest and best known social movements that developed out of the ecclesiastical base are the União Nacional por Moradia Popular (UNMP, the National Union for Popular Housing) and the Movimento dos Trabalhadores Sem Terra, or MST (commonly called the Landless Peasants' Movement, or Landless Workers' Movement). The MST began in 1984 with the mission of addressing historic inequalities in rural areas due to a highly concentrated land ownership system. The organization advocates for

agrarian reform by collectively squatting on and farming unproductive land. During just the first few years, the MST managed to establish small farms for 250,000 of its affiliated families and members (Mier, 2015). In the 2000's, the group embraced national politics and established close ties with the Worker's Party (Partido Trabalhador, PT). They shifted their focus to consolidating democratic, community control over its affiliated villages in 23 states, received federal funding to carry out adult literacy and teacher programs, and designed curriculums for public schools that teach about agrarian reform issues. Beyond these activities, the MST now has an international presence, collaborating with the International Peasants Movement and engaging in political organizing work in developing countries. Importantly, the MST has been active in coordinating international protests against multinational mining and agribusiness companies such as Vale and Cargill. Today, the MST has a strong presence on state universities throughout Brazil as well as a significant presence on the national political stage (Mier, 2015).

Another major social movement organization that grew out of the ecclesiastical base is the UNMP, which formed when the original authors of Brazil's 1988 constitution opened the process to popular amendments. The group's original goal was to create a union for dozens of urban housing movements. Today, the group has nearly 200,000 members around the country that organize to guarantee the constitutional right to dignified housing (Mier, 2015). They do this by occupying abandoned buildings in downtown areas of major cities including Rio de Janeiro, coordinate to resist eviction and pressure local governments to restore dilapidated buildings for public housing. UNMP also occupies unproductive, vacant lots of land on the edges of cities and often builds independent self-managed housing cooperatives in these locations (Mier, 2015). In the

2000's with the election of President Lula from the PT party, the UNMP was closely integrated in federal policy initiatives most notably for the R\$2.3 billion housing program called Minha Casa Minha Vida. This program built millions of housing units, often on previously unproductive land, and subsidized the autonomous construction of housing units (Mier, 2015). In this way, these two major social movements, that originated from the ecclesiastical base, have over time become closely integrated into Brazilian politics and have played a significant role in social policy delivery.

In the mid-1970's the increasing growth of popular mobilization began to demonstrate that the military was slowly losing its ability to control civil society and the transition back to democratic rule began as repression eased. Also, during this time, the urban peripheries rapidly grew, and new neighborhood associations formed to improve living conditions in the favelas and end the vertical ties of political clientelism. In the early 1980's social movements became broader and better organized and the state began to recognize civil society organizations as a new political force and formidable opponent to the state. By the end of the decade, grassroots movements helped inspire widespread mobilization against the military government which eventually gave in and allowed a civilian president to assume office in March of 1985, ending twenty-one years of military rule (Friendly, 2016: 220). These grassroots organizations rallied around the same slogan of "Direitas Já!" (which translates as, "Rights, Now!") and inspired millions of people to take to the streets throughout the country ("Brazil's Own Goal", Article 19, 2014).

Brazilian civil society continued to organize several other crucial social movements that inspired significant policy changes as the local and national level. Among these is the Movement of Painted Faces which was a massive national protest in

1992 during which hundreds of thousands of people demanded the resignation of President Fernando Collor de Melo due to corruption. Another important protest was the Freedom March of 2011 in which thousands of protesters marched throughout the streets of 41 Brazilian cities to demand an end to police repression and abuse of power (Article 19, 2014). However, massive national coordinated protests did not always take place peacefully. In 2005, the national march for agrarian reform ended with police and protesters clashing, injuring more than 32 protesters and 18 police officers (Article 19, 2014). The most well-known instance of peaceful protests turning violent was in 2013 when protesters were met with brutal force by the military police who fired tear gas and rubber bullets often indiscriminately into the crowd (H.J., 2013). As discussed in the literature review, the 2013 protests proved to be a significant in that they motivated highly diverse sectors of society to mobilize in the streets and cause the largest protests in the country in two decades (H.J., 2013).

Despite some of the significant progress made in the first decade of the 2000's when civil society closely partnered with the state for social service provision, the current state of Brazilian civil society has shifted to play a more oppositional role. This is particularly true in Rio de Janeiro, where a conservative evangelical Mayor was elected in 2016 and has since enacted a far-right social policy agenda. Since gaining power, Marcelo Crivella, who was previously an Evangelical pastor, has aligned himself as a close ally of conservative President Temer's administration and has advocated for local legislation to ban abortion and remove progressive language on gender identity and sexual orientation from city classrooms (Faiola and Kaiser, 2017). In November 2017, he slashed funding for the city's annual gay pride parade as well as for Carnival, the largest

event in the city which added an estimated \$11 billion dollars to the local economy in 2018 (Faiola and Kaiser, 2017; Alves, 2018).

Although Crivella's conservative administration has proved troubling for civil society activities, the largest challenge for Rio's social movements has been to confront and resist the recent military takeover of the city. In February 2018, just shortly after carnival, Brazil's federal government announced that the military would take over all public security duties in the state of Rio de Janeiro. Leaders justified the decision by citing a recent spike in criminal activity, though statistics showed a decrease in crime as compared to carnival the year before. Although Rio de Janeiro does have a very high murder rate and a long history of criminal violence, it pales into comparison to cities in the north like Natal and Belem. Despite this, soldiers swiftly took the place of police officers and soldiers in tanks soon instituted checkpoints throughout the city, including some in elementary schools (Soifer, 2018). In matters of public security, the State Governor and city Mayor now must yield all power to the army's top general, Walter Souza Braga Netto (Soifer, 2018). Soon after these changes took place, civil society responded by forming a Truth Commission to keep the army in check during the intervention. Marielle Franco, a popular city councilwoman from the Socialism Freedom Party (Partido Socialismo e Liberdade or PSOL) was appointed as the commission's rapporteur. Marielle was selected for this role due to her long-time role as an activist in the Maré favela, where she is from, where deadly police and criminal violence is a near daily occurrence (Phillips, 2018). On March 14th, less than a month after the military intervention, Marielle was mysteriously gunned down while driving in downtown Rio de Janeiro. The murder sent shockwaves throughout the entire country and worldwide and

the morning after it was reported, tens of thousands of people gathered in front of City Hall to protest the killing (Phillips, 2018) (**Error! Not a valid bookmark self-reference.**).



Figure 1 Protesters gather outside City Hall in Rio de Janeiro on March 15, 2018, the day after the murder of Councilwoman Marielle Franco's murder. Photo Source: The Guardian: March 17, 2018

The death of Marielle was a particularly difficult blow to local civil society organizations, many of which she closely collaborated with as a City Councilwoman and before as an activist. Her identity as a gay, single-mother, and Afro-Brazilian woman from the peripheral regions of the city was an especially powerful symbol of possibility in a notoriously rigid society. Because of this, Marielle often served a crucial yet rare role in Brazilian government as a connector between the state and the people. She sought to bring government institutions closer to underserved populations and advocated that popular social movements not view institutions as foreign spaces but rather as forums for discussion where they deserved to be present (Bringel, 2018). Marielle also aimed to better connect activism and academia and pointedly observed that both would benefit from greater collaboration with one another (Bringel, 2018). Nearly six months after her

murder, no suspects have been named and the political sphere has largely fallen quiet (Langlois, 2018). The case of Marielle is unfortunately emblematic of a larger systemic problem where weak and corrupt security and justice systems that lack both resources and political will, sustain a culture of impunity. Because of this, authorities resort to militarized answers to solve social and political problems (Azzi, 2017: 593). Overall, the murder of Marielle Franco is a tragedy that marks a challenging year for civil society in Rio de Janeiro. In the months since her death local and international human rights organization have continuously called for authorities to solve the crime (Figure 2) (Figure 3). Importantly they have also advocated for continued activism in the wake of the murder and greater international solidarity so that authorities will be pressured to finally bring the perpetrators to justice (Amnesty International: June 12, 2018). At the time of conducting research, activists continued to organize rallies on the 1 and 2-month anniversary of the Marielle’s murder but it remains to be seen if this level of engagement can be maintained in the long-term.

Figure 2 (Left) The coffins of Marielle Franco and her driver arrive at Rio’s city hall as protesters and citizens came to pay their respects. Personal photo, 2018.



Figure 3 (Right) A protest in April 2018, marking the one-month anniversary of her murder. The sign reads “Marielle Lives! Militarization, not in our names”. Personal photo, 2018.

How protests play out in the public spaces of Rio de Janeiro

Brazilians, and *Cariocas* (natives of Rio) have a long-held contentious relationship with public space. The Brazilian linguist and sociologist Roberto da Matta examined this in his classical study *The House, the Street, and the Barracks: Reform and Honorable Masculine Social Space in Brazil, 1864-1945*. The author finds that during this formative period in the country's history, linguistic conceptualizations of the house vs. the street reveal cultural notions of power and honor. In the 19th century, "Brazilians commonly associate the house with honor, family, order, marriage, safety, and private power, while the street connoted disgrace, chaos, illegitimacy, danger, vagrancy, and vulnerability to the vagaries of impersonal public authority" (Beattie, 1996: 440). Indeed, any association with the street threatened family honor, which served as the foundational concept for Brazilian law and order. Even the term for public square or plaza in Portuguese, *praça*, was used in 19th century Brazil to describe both soldiers and non-commissioned officers who were commonly associated with the perceived dishonorable and disorderly world of the street (Beattie, 1996: 441). Overtime, the national and local view of public space continued to be challenged and transformed.

One of the earliest instances of mass civil dissent in the newly independent Brazilian capital of Rio de Janeiro took place during the vaccine riot in 1904. During this year, city public health officials, (from a recently created public health department) initiated a campaign against smallpox which was quickly ravaging the capital. The public health department, led by Oswaldo Cruz, declared that the smallpox vaccine would be obligatory for all citizens. However, beyond the introduction of the vaccine, the campaign also included the targeted demolition of poor and working-class neighborhoods

in the name of public health and modernization. These actions sparked a highly segregated pattern of growth in the city where rich neighborhoods are located near the best services while poor areas severely lack even basic sanitation (Meade, 1986: 302). The riots sparked by the vaccine campaign included a cross-section of society, including labor unions, who were not only motivated by misinformation about the vaccine but also about the threat of displacement (Meade, 1986: 304). In this way, the vaccine riot was a decidedly urban act of protest taking place within public spaces and confronting issues about which parts of society determine the city's direction of growth. Following the riots, official policies of repression against the poor became a common feature of 20th century Rio. More authoritarian solutions were proposed to tackle public health problems and the city's poorest neighborhoods continue to be characterized by bad sanitation, a lack of housing, lack of food, and high prices (Meade, 1986: 315; Osborn, 2016; Gama, et. al, 2015).

In the early 1980s, the dictatorial regime that ruled Brazil since 1964 began to soften, and new openings for making demands on the state emerged. A key example of this change occurred in 2001 when activists successfully advocated for the "City Statute," a law that guarantees land access, equity, and a right to the city (Vicino and Fahlberg, 2017). Generally, urban centers have become both the object of and the space for contentious politics, as diverse groups struggle to make demands on their interests in the state. Urban settings for protest in Brazil have especially gained importance since the country experienced one of the highest urbanization rates in the world. In 1872, only 10% of Brazil's municipalities had 20,000 inhabitants (and only three had over 100,000), but by 2000, 80% of Brazil's 175 million inhabitants resided in urban centers (Vicino and

Fahlberg, 2017). More recently, protests in Rio de Janeiro have challenged notions of urban citizenship, while making demands for social change (Vicino and Fahlberg, 2017).

The most recent wave of mass protests to occupy the streets of Rio de Janeiro and throughout the country occurred in the summer of 2013. The protests were notable for many reasons, but particularly because they were sparked by core urban issues and activists were able to effectively communicate messages that “problematized the city” (Caldeira, 2015: 133). When officials first introduced bus fare increases in Sao Paulo and later in Rio de Janeiro, the streets incrementally erupted with protesters tired of facing the constant indignity of riding in extremely overpacked public transportation every day. Protests exploded from 6,000 people congregating in downtown Sao Paulo, to over a million protesters spread throughout multiple Brazilian cities (Holston, 2014: 889). As the protests grew in size so did the demands, moving beyond a focus on improved urban mobility by advocating for increasing public spending for infrastructure, health, education, housing; greater recognition of women-gay-indigenous-black-citizen rights; greater attention on corruption, political reform (parties, elections, congress), justice, security, environmental regulation, among other demands (Holston, 2014: 889). The demands made by protesters in 2013 varied widely but they generally pertained to the conditions and qualities of urban life as well as the failures of city, regional, and federal governments to provide adequate goods and services in urban spaces (Holston, 2014: 895).

Another demand was an end to the deeply ingrained patterns of spatial segregation that separates classes, sometimes with great distances, which in turn causes traffic and general immobility (Caldeira, 2015: 133). The Movimento Passe Livre (MPL)

proved to be adept at articulating the everyday frustrations of the city and of urban life. Tellingly, the slogan of the MPL is, “A city only exists for those who can move around it” (Caldeira, 2015: 134). This powerful statement echoes the Right to the City theory by demanding a fundamental urban service, well-functioning public transportation, for all residents. Though the protests of 2013 arguably did not result in significant political change, they were significant for their urban focus and demands to improve urban life. A positive outcome is that the protests inspired young people to look for democratic and radical solutions to the persistent problem of urban mobility and many other issues that Brazilian cities continue to face (Caldeira, 2015: 134).

One of the most remarkable characteristics of the demonstrations of 2013 was the way in which the military police and riot police, two state forces regularly assigned to protests, unexpectedly reacted to the largely peaceful protests with extreme force and repression (Fhoutine, 2013; Guimares, 2013; Xavier, 2014). This immediately fueled outrage and garnered thousands of more participants to the movement. Media coverage at first focused on the sporadic acts of vandalism in an attempt to discredit the movement (Mendoza, 2015). However, after several prominent journalists were injured or unlawfully taken into custody (Locatelli, 2014), coverage decidedly changed in favor of the protestors (Mendoza, 2015). From on the ground reporting of the protests, an important police tactic became apparent: the manipulation of the urban landscape. These tactics included funneling protesters into wide boulevards, corralling protesters within intersections (Barchfield, 2013), and using smaller parks and plazas as temporary holding grounds while making arbitrary mass arrests (Locatelli, 2014). The police forces employed these strategies to counteract protesters, control crowds and ultimately

discourage civic expression, often through violent means. By the end of the demonstrations, 2,608 people were arrested, and 8 died during the 696 protests that took place throughout the country in June 2013. Furthermore, 117 journalists were injured and 10 were arrested while covering the events (Artigo 19, 2014: 105). The interactions between protesters and police forces on the streets of many Brazilian cities during this time, demonstrates a connection between urban form and the ability of social movements to make demands in public space.

The 2013 protests were also significant for challenging social movement networks of traditional political parties and demonstrating that the strategies of the then-powerful Workers Party (Partido Trabalhador or “PT” as it is known) were no longer relevant or effective (Holsten, 2014: 896). Indeed, one of the main driving forces uniting all the protesters was a desire to express demands independently from established political parties. Regular citizens were frustrated of being routinely left out of important decisions and believed that only certain sectors of the population were benefiting from the prosperity that Brazil experienced in the early 2000’s (Teixeira and Baiocchi, 2013). Additionally, traditional social movements cautiously kept their distance from the 2013 protests, suspicious of the involvement of the middle classes and a general distrust of the political establishment that tried to embrace the movement (Teixeira and Baiocchi, 2013). Despite the tremendous levels of participation, the 2013 protests have largely been unable to sustain the movement, and no new political institutions have emerged. However, the protests did shed light on the segregation between urban life in the center vs. the vast periphery, especially in Rio de Janeiro. The movement also managed to transform the previous notion that rights to housing, land, and infrastructure are a privilege, to a more

egalitarian ideal that all citizens have rights to these essential services as citizens of a city and of a nation (Holston, 2014: 894).

Despite some limitations, the 2013 movement has produced several lingering effects on the status of civil dissent and protest in Rio de Janeiro today. To some observers, the rejection of the political establishment in 2013 opened new possibilities to become involved politically and inspired those who previously preferred to stay uninvolved in such reform movements. The movement also served to overturn the deeply ingrained idea that Brazilians are peaceful, docile people who are not interested in struggling for greater rights and that the poorer populations are disinterested politically. The protests also helped to counter a long-held, state-supported idea that Brazil is unique among the rest of the countries in the Western Hemisphere for creating a “racial democracy” (Freyre, 1986). The racial democracy thesis is that individual races do not exist in Brazil, instead there is only a national multi-colored race and that popularly used racial categories are fluid and ambiguous (Htun, 2004: 61). Historically, the idea helped politicians to avoid discussions on institutionalized racism and attribute the disproportionate impoverishment of Afro-Brazilians to class discrimination and the legacy of slavery, instead of state-sponsored segregation (Htun, 2004: 64). The 2013 protest movement challenged the national myth that Brazil is a racial democracy as well as free of sexism and class prejudice (Mattos, 2014: 73-74).

To other observers, the 2013 movement managed to pluralize participation in speaking out against government corruption at first, but later marked a shift in the configuration of social movements (Avritzer, 2017). Since 2013, participation in social movements and demonstrations has split decidedly between liberal and conservative

groups and more affluent middle-class citizens have increasingly taken part in influential collective action measures, guided by conservative opposition forces. This new structure of participation, which weakened the presence of the PT in the streets, facilitated the impeachment of President Dilma Rousseff in 2016. Her government was then replaced by the conservative government of Michele Temer (Avritzer, 2017; Romero, 2016). This timeline of political events highlights the importance of collective action in Brazilian politics and the influence that civil resistance movements hold over the trajectory of the nation's leadership. In order for collective action to play this important role, it needs accessible public spaces within which to communicate their message of dissent. The next section describes some of the policies that have affected the use of public space in general in Rio and questions whether these spaces are truly public.

Policies that shape the use of public space in Rio

As previously mentioned, cariocas (natives of Rio de Janeiro) have a long-held contentious relationship with public space. However, because of the city's unique coastal geography, Rio's beach has served as an important public space and inspiration for local culture. The most famous and widely visited beaches in the city, Copacabana and Ipanema, serve as symbolic spaces of citizenship in carioca society (Freeman, 2016). Although the city is known worldwide for its glaring inequality between rich and poor, there is a common perception of the beach in Rio as a democratic space where the differences between rich and poor can no longer be seen. This perception (or myth, depending on your view) extends to the year-round street celebrations, called *blocos*, and the corner bars, referred to as *pe sujo*, where Cariocas of different classes and

backgrounds mingle and converse (Freeman, 2016). In these “third spaces” (Oldenburg, 1989) that are neither workplaces nor private homes, people can meet and be present in the public sphere where they may establish their own sense of community or even form their own political opinions through socialization. In this way, the beach and other third spaces in the city, provide a place where the poor majority can enter the public sphere and make their presence known (Freeman, 2016).

However, the ideal of the democratic beach does not align with the multiple public policies that have restricted access to Ipanema and Copacabana for decades. The Zona Sul, where these beaches are located as well as most of the city’s iconic sights, is an elite enclave where a small proportion of the city’s population reside. Most of Rio’s population live in the expansive northern and western zones, beyond a steep mountainous range that separates them from the Zona Sul. Many of these regions suffered from decades of neglect due to a political doctrine of non-interference, which allowed organized crime to flourish over time (Azzi, 2017: 592). Despite the great distances that already exist between social classes because of the city’s segregated geography, city politicians have cut bus lines that connect the favelas to the beach and limited weekend service for existing routes (Freeman, 2016). Because of this, access to some of Rio’s most important public spaces is greatly restricted. This trend of declining public space access also correlates to the national rise in political polarization, criminal violence, and elite fear. As a result, the city’s upper classes retreat to their fortress-like apartments with high gates and 24/7 guards and continue to avoid public spaces and public life altogether (Freeman, 2016). Despite public laws that enforce the public nature of these spaces, in reality these areas have assumed a very exclusive character and a majority of the

population is separated from these spaces through financial, physical, and social barriers.

The protests that I observed at the beaches of Copacabana and Ipanema were often impactful because of the symbolic message they were able to send by simply occupying these spaces that are normally playgrounds for the elite members of society. By protesting and existing in these spaces, even temporarily, the marches took on an additional significance by reminding the audience that they belong in these spaces too, and likewise the spaces belong to them. Throughout my experience in Brazil, the activists that I spoke with were often proud to mention that keeping the beaches public is a right guaranteed in the Brazilian constitution, however, they also lamented that in reality the most beautiful parts of the city are often inaccessible for a great majority of the city's population.

Another lens with which to view the state of public space in Rio today is by examining the political efforts to regulate, or prevent altogether, informal street vendors. During the 1980's and 1990's, Brazil and most of Latin America experienced a proliferation of neo-liberal adjustment policies that often forced the state to withdraw from service provision, resulting in increased poverty levels which left many to turn to the informal sector to make a living (Azzi, 2017: 593). Since then, local and state officials have enacted several policies whose official goal is to formalize these sectors but in fact, these laws restrict certain uses of public spaces and severely punish those who disobey (Hirata, 2014). Instead of establishing clear labor norms, these policies addressed how public spaces should be used and promote increased policing and monitoring of behavior using security cameras. Developers continue to build increasingly more closed environments, such as malls, with help from local economic policies that provide access

to credit and encourage economic concentration in certain areas (Hirata, 2014). Today, street vendors in Rio de Janeiro operate in increasingly more militarized public spaces as punitive policies attempt to remove ‘undesirables’ from areas of economic interest (Cortes-Nieto, 2017).

This trend of exclusion is not unique to Rio de Janeiro and has become a more common characteristic of cities throughout Latin America as more city governments choose to indulge private interests. Urban governance in the region, especially in mega cities such as Rio or Sao Paulo, have shifted their focus to enhancing their city’s competitive position in the global marketplace and attracting investment to boost growth (Cortes-Nieto, 2017: 44). This pattern has especially unfolded in central downtown neighborhoods which suffered years of deterioration in the mid-20th century because of de-industrialization (Cortes-Nieto, 2017: 46). The restoration of these downtown areas, which in the case of Rio de Janeiro occurred as part of the preparations for the Olympics, is part of a larger goal to make the city more attractive to investors. Greater policing of public spaces also contributes to this goal as leaders set out to create the image of a secure city which they claim to be a precondition for any economic or social prosperity (Cortes-Nieto, 2017: 57).

This section reviewed the historic and local context of civil resistance movements in public spaces throughout Rio de Janeiro. Chapter three describes the methodology used for this project, the guiding research questions, and the limitations and challenges that I faced in studying this topic.

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

This research project seeks to better understand how spatial trends are playing out in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil and connect them to the challenges that activists face to express dissent in public space. My main research questions are: Do activists encounter spatial vulnerabilities or geographic challenges to best express their messages of dissent? What strategies do they use to overcome these challenges or better communicate with their targeted audience? The research aims to gain insight into these broader questions by examining the case of Rio de Janeiro and how five different activist groups organize and perform protests in urban space. To answer these questions, I collected the perspectives, testimonies, and strategies of leaders and members of various types of activist organizations throughout Rio from November 2017- to May 2018. From the information gathered through interviews and an online survey, I explore how activists organize protest events in urban space, the spatial patterns of marches, the reactions of police during these events, and how the site of protest impacted the event.

Interview Method and Introduction to Interviewed Organizations

I conducted interviews with leaders from organizations who have a role in planning the routes, locations and choreographies of protest for their group. The interview questions address why activists choose particular public spaces for expressing dissent, how they conduct demonstrations, whether they encounter police repression and what type, and if they believe that the site of protest facilitated the goals of their movement or not. I also asked broader questions towards the end of the interview about the availability and perceived accessibility of public space throughout the city.

I conducted one on one interviews in Portuguese with seven activists from five different organizations: Grupo Arco-Iris, Copacabana por diretas e por direitos, Marcha da Maconha, Marcha das Vadias, and Marcha das Favelas pela Legalizacao. During the interviews, I took handwritten notes and recorded the respondents with their permission. I recorded the interviews to ensure accurate comprehension of what was said in Portuguese and in order to transcribe and translate the interviews at a later time. I did not use a verbatim transcription technique but transcribed the data as closely as possible in order to accurately translate from Portuguese to English. As a result, there is a possibility that some information might have been lost in the process or translated incorrectly. However, I have studied Portuguese for five years prior to conducting this research and am confident that the captured information from the interviews accurately reflects the experiences and opinions of the respondents.

The largest and most well-established organization that I interviewed is Grupo Arco Iris, which began in 1993 with a mission of transforming the local reality for LGBTQ persons in Rio de Janeiro. The group's main goals are to end discrimination and negative preconceptions of LGBTQ cariocas. To do this, the group sought to institutionalize their movement by creating a physical space in the center of the city where LGBTQ persons could find resources and community. The very first march was organized in 1995 with just 12 attendees, which the organizer I interviewed attributed to a significant climate of fear that prevented LGBTQ people from participating in public acts of protest. However, the next year in 1996, the group experienced a significant leap in attracting people to their movement with an estimated 2,000 people attending that year's march (interview: November 28, 2017). Today, the group organizes one of the largest

marches in the city with an estimated 800,000 people participating in the November 20, 2017 pride parade (Alves, 2017).

Another group that protests in the same location as Grupo Arco Iris is Marcha das Vadias (March of the Sluts) which has a much smaller following but also works to counteract cultural and political homophobia, transphobia, as well as sexism in Rio and across Brazil (Marcha das Vadias Facebook page; interview, March 28, 2018). The group began as a local chapter of the transnational Slutwalk movement which began in Toronto in 2011 in response to comments made by a police officer placing blame on women becoming victims of sexual assault due to the way they dress (CBC, 2011). The Rio chapter shares the mission as the transnational movement but also focuses on more local issues such as labor rights for sex workers in Copacabana and fighting rape culture. Marcha das Vadias was started by a group of women in their 30's because they viewed older feminist groups as less willing to protest and not able to accurately address current issues. The group began with a few number of members in 2011, increased participation following the ousting of President Dilma Rousseff in 2016, but now face a decline in activity with only one march organized each year (interview: March 28, 2018). When I attended the annual Marcha das Vadias event in Copacabana in November of 2017, there was an estimated 100 people in attendance, with increasing participation as the event progressed.

I interviewed another small and recently established activist group in Copacabana called Copacabana por diretas e por direitos (translates as "Copacabana for legal and social rights"). They are a local group of neighborhood residents who recently formed an activist group after what they viewed to be an illegal coup overthrew President Dilma

Rousseff in late 2016. They state their mission as an organization is to occupy spaces, defend the democratic state and rule of law, fight for national sovereignty, and deepen republic values (Copacabana por diretas e por direitos, Facebook page; interview: November 30, 2018). The group is unique in that they want to distinguish themselves from more formal activist organizations and instead portray themselves as a group of politically frustrated residents who until very recently did not participate in activist organizations or formal political parties. In fact, they prefer to not be referred to as an organization but rather simply as a group of residents who formed a public service movement with the ultimate goal of defending the right to direct elections in Brazil and defending the rights of the most vulnerable workers (interview: November 30, 2018). Through their activism, Copacabana por diretas e por direitos (abbreviated in this paper as CDD) seeks to address both local and national issues and collaborate with other neighborhoods who have recently begun organizing as well. These include the neighborhoods of Laranjeiras, Tijuca, Bairro da Fatima, Flamengo, Largo do Machado, San Salvador, among others, that have formed similar activist groups since the 2016 overthrow of President Rousseff (interview: November 30, 2018). Above all, CDD aims to educate fellow citizens in their neighborhood and throughout the city on how various political forces threaten Brazil's democratic institutions.

The last two groups I interviewed advocate for marijuana legalization but represent two very different sides to the issue of decriminalization and recreational/medicinal use. Marcha da Maconha (Marijuana March) involves a collective of different groups that vary in their mission and strategic approach but all share in the common goal of decriminalization of marijuana use. Marcha da Maconha has taken place

every May since the year 2000, each year with a different political theme that unites all the participants. This year, the theme was “Intervenção Não” in reference to the military seizing control of the state of Rio de Janeiro’s police forces (Londoño and Darlington, 2018). The last group I interviewed, Marcha das Favelas pela Legalizacao (March of the Favelas for Legalization) also advocates for marijuana legalization but is organized primarily by individuals from the peripheral areas of the city, called *comunidades* or *favelas*. This group takes a broader approach, advocating for the full legalization of all drugs, not just marijuana. In the view of the organizers, the peripheral areas of Rio de Janeiro suffer the greatest amount of repression from regular police operations that seek to capture gang leaders in the name of preventing the drug trade but very often result in innocent casualties and significant disruption to the function of the community (interview, May 5, 2018; Barroso, 2017). Together, these two groups address one of the most critical issues affecting Rio de Janeiro and the future of the city’s security.

Safeguarding the identities of the interview respondents was a major concern for this project. Participants in the study faced potential legal and political risks to take part in my interviews, given the current political climate in Brazil which has punished protest participants in the past, including physically during demonstrations or by arresting activists and pressing charges (Human Rights Watch, 2014). I also wanted to protect the identities of the interview subjects in case they divulged information during their interview that could be interpreted as an admission of guilt by the authorities (for example, vandalism during a protest). For these reasons, I did not use the names of the interview subjects in my analysis and only used the name of their organizations with their permission. Privacy was also a concern due to the possibility that participants would

experience emotional stress, as activists in Rio have often experienced repression at the hands of the police. For this reason, I obtained verbal consent at the beginning of each interview to remind the subject that participation is voluntary, and their testimony may be rescinded until one month after the date of the interview.

Online Survey Method

During the course of conducting interviews, I approached other local activists who wanted to participate in the study but were unable to travel for an interview into the Zona Sul (south zone of the city), where I was based. Because of this, I decided to create an online survey that asked similar questions to those from the in-person interviews and could be completed online. I used SurveyMonkey software to host the survey which consisted of 35 multiple choice and descriptive questions and took an average of 10 minutes to complete. I sent a link to the online survey through email to different organizations or through Facebook messenger to their organization's pages. I received four responses from the online surveys from the following organizations: LBL - Liga Brasileira de Lésbicas, Centro de Articulação de Populações Marginalizada, Grupo Conexão G de Cidadania LGBT de Favelas, Marcha Mundial das Mulheres. The first three of these organizations are based in the peripheral areas of Rio de Janeiro, while the Marcha Mundial das Mulheres is based in the Zona Sul but was unavailable for an in-person interview. Although this was helpful to collect more data, the responses were not as rich in detail as the information I was able to gather from the interviews. However, the survey data reveals a few interesting insights that helps to shed more light on how social movements throughout Rio organize themselves and what spatial challenges they might

encounter. Overall, the online survey reveals limited yet helpful insight into the priorities and strategies of activist organizers and the elements that public spaces are lacking most in order to sustain social movements.

Observation Method

The last method that I used for the research was to attend different protests in-person and observe how the activists organized the physical movement of the protest and take note of the character of the protest and any sort of resistance that might be encountered. Throughout my time in Rio I would regularly follow the social media accounts of various types of activist groups and attend as many protests as possible that they advertised through Facebook, Twitter or Instagram. Once I established some contacts with activist leaders, they invited me to events as well. Another source I used regularly was referring to the website and Facebook page of Midia Ninja, which is operated by a coalition of journalists and a network of citizen journalists who document different civil resistance actions taking place throughout Brazil (Midia Ninja Facebook page). In November of 2017 I attended the following protests: an anti-racism and discrimination protest led by Brigadas Populares on Leblon beach, the LGBT Pride march on Copacabana beach led by Grupo Arco Iris, an anti-austerity protest organized by a leftist coalition including the Brigadas Populares and Movimento sem Terra (MST), and a neighborhood protest organized by Copacabana por Direitos e Direitas in the Manuel Campos de Paz plaza. In December 2017 I attended the Marcha das Vadias (March of the Sluts) on Copacabana beach and a demonstration by the Frente Feminista da Esquerda (Leftist Feminist Front) in Cinelandia plaza in downtown Rio. In February

2018 I attended the Rocinha en Foco march along Avenida Niemeyer between Vidigal and Leblon and a community event hosted by Copacabana por Direitas e Direitos at the Maria Isabel Theater in Copacabana; in March 2018 I attended two protests in the aftermath of Marielle Franco's assassination in Cinelandia plaza and in front of the National Assembly building in downtown Rio, I also attended the Marcha das Mulheres (Women's March) in Cinelandia plaza. In April 2018 I attended a protest/community meeting hosted by Copacabana por direiros e direitas in the Serzedelo Correa Plaza in Copacabana, and a march commemorating the one month anniversary of the murder of Marielle Franco in front of the Candelaria church in downtown Rio. In May of 2018 I attended the Marcha da Maconha (Marijuana Legalization) on Ipanema beach and the second anniversary march for Mariele Franco's death in front of the Candelaria church and Cinelandia plaza downtown.

When I attended a protest I would take pictures and bring a notebook to record some of my initial observations. I would also try to engage the participants in informal conversation to ask them more about the goals of the protest and their experience in participating in the protest. Observation was a helpful method in my research to physically experience the event and gain a first-hand perspective of any spatial challenges that faced the group in their chosen site of protest. I was also able to see how the police reacted to different types of events and whether they actively resisted the event or just maintained a watchful presence. Attending and observing protests also helped me to conduct better informed interviews with activist leaders because I became more familiar with the spaces they referred to and gained a better understanding of the challenges they faced in organizing protests.

Limitations of the Methodology

Throughout the project, I encountered some challenges that limited the scope of the research but could be remedied to improve the study in the future. Firstly, I arrived in Rio de Janeiro with no contacts and no previous connections to civil society organizations or any groups that regularly or spontaneously organize public protests. As a result, I cast a wide net in terms of the groups that I contacted for interviews in the hopes that I would be able to collect information on various strategies of protest throughout the city. I primarily interviewed groups that were well-established in the city (some more than others) and have been organizing in the city for up to thirty years. The groups that I interviewed did not experience repression very much by local police and instead often described close collaboration with the city's various law enforcement branches as a necessary step in organizing any protest. Many of these groups cooperated with the local police throughout the year and had good working relationships with the city's many different branches of law enforcement. However, these experiences are certainly not representative of all civil society or oppositional activist groups in the city, many of which experience repression, violence, and censure at the hands of the police or other local government branches ("Brazil: Guarantee Protesters' Rights", Human Rights Watch, 2016; "Brutal Repression of Protests" Article 19, 2016). This weakness in my research is due to the very small sample group from which I collected my qualitative data. However, I still believe the analysis presents important information on how activists use space in Rio de Janeiro, what challenges they face in organizing or performing protest, and whether the spaces of protest impact their message or ability to make

demands.

Lastly, another limitation of the research is due to my own subjective experience as a foreigner conducting research in an unfamiliar city. The geography of Rio de Janeiro as a highly segregated city also limits the analysis as I was unable to survey the peripheral areas of Rio which contain entirely different patterns of urban development and face different challenges in organizing social movements. I was able to collect some perspectives from activist organizers in the peripheral communities by using the online survey, however perspectives from this part of the city are greatly lacking. This is a significant limitation given that the 2010 census revealed that over 22% of the city's population live in the 763 favelas spread throughout the periphery (Galdo, 2011). This is also significant since the peripheral areas lack basic housing, health and education services, and general infrastructure and arguably have the most demands to make on the state ("Unidas, Favelas" Carta Capital, 2013). Understanding how social movements in favelas make these demands and the spatial patterns of their protest movements will be an important addition to this research in the future. The next section will provide more contextual information on the history of civil resistance in Rio de Janeiro, the status and current challenges faced by social movements today, and where acts of protest take place within the city.

Chapter IV. How space challenges and benefits Rio's activists

Towards the end of my experience in Brazil, I was invited to conduct an interview with the Marcha das Favelas pela Legalização, a group of activists from the Mangueiras favela in the north zone of Rio de Janeiro who advocate for marijuana legalization as a means to reduce the policy brutality in their community. I jumped at the chance to conduct this interview, as it was the only successful connection I was able to make with an activist group located in the vast peripheral areas outside of Rio's more affluent zona sul, or south zone. It was my last chance to capture a very different perspective from the other groups that I had interviewed, all of which were based in the zona sul and typically protested in central downtown Rio or along the beaches. The interview contact told me to meet them in the Cinelandia plaza one afternoon and I imagined that we would go to a nearby café but instead they lead me on a nearly 30 minute walk through the streets of downtown Rio before we arrived at a large office building where the organization's legal advocate operates. Immediately I knew this would be a different interview than the others I had conducted, because the organization's representatives immediately launched into anecdotes of extreme police brutality that their community suffers on a daily basis, serving as the primary motivation for their activism. They showed me countless Youtube videos that captured this brutality and despite the shocking violence and corruption captured, I was struck by the relatively low amount of views. Later, as I steered the conversation to focus more on the spaces that the group used to protest, I asked the group if they would consider protesting in the Cinelandia plaza which is in front of City Hall and is known as the one of the most traditional and symbolic sites of protest. While I expected the respondents to say that they would like to eventually protest in Cinelandia

once they became a larger organization, I was struck when they told me that it would be pointless for them to take their message there because, according to the respondents, those spaces were not for them. They further explained that these spaces are not as accessible because as favela residents, they would meet significant resistance from the police if they protested in favor of drug legalization in front of an institution such as City Hall. Logistically, it would be very difficult for the group to convince residents of Manginhos to travel downtown for the protest, a distance that is not financially feasible for many. Most importantly, organizing in these areas would be pointless because their group wanted to communicate their message to other favela residents, not to the more affluent residents and workers of downtown Rio (interview: May 10, 2018). This interview experience was very impactful, as it encapsulated the challenges, both physical, social, and political, that many of the interviewed groups face to protest in certain urban spaces. Despite these challenges, the activist groups of this research project developed alternative ways to maintain communication with target audiences. The largest themes that emerged from the data collected are that the interviewed groups strategically choose their protest sites, temporarily disrupt the significance of these spaces, and utilize choreography to send their message to the target audience. These techniques allow the groups to maintain their activism despite ongoing spatial and political challenges.

Importantly, the findings from this research do not suggest a connection between the protest strategies that the groups use and their overall effectiveness to create social and political change. Rather, the goals of the project were to determine whether activists in Rio face physical, social, or political barriers to protesting in public spaces and what techniques they employ to overcome some of these barriers. By using certain strategies to

protest in the streets and other public spaces, I identify ways that activists creatively use space to communicate messages to the surrounding audience, without assuming that these strategies actually lead to improved ability to cause social change and concrete changes in policy or laws. However, the protests that I observed and the activists that I interviewed used their strategies to to successfully contest the ideas and meanings that are associated with the location of protest. In doing this, the activist groups were able to use public spaces to send strong visual messages to the surrounding audiences. Although these visual messages do not necessarily translate into political or social change, protests are an initial part of the process of social change by working to slowly change public opinion, which may then lead to greater social power to pressure lawmakers, oust political opponents and eventually elect stronger allies. While protests themselves may not lead to definitive changes in policy, they often are a first step in a long chain of events that might lead to concrete social change (Hall, 2002).

As I gathered the qualitative data for this research through in-person interviews, email interviews, and an online survey, I observed how the activist leaders evaluate their options and make rational decisions about when, where, and how to protest in defiance of a grievance or in defense of a right. The information that I gathered demonstrates that Rio has a well-defined and active network of social movements that collaborate with one another as coalitions. Participants engaged in these networks serve as strong membership foundations for these movements, perhaps because engaging in protest is a norm within these circles. The interviewed activists also utilize resources to sustain their action. While some excel at gathering financial resources (Grupo Arco-Iris), others excel at utilizing moral and human resources (Marcha da Maconha and Marcha das Mulheres). Because of

these observations I used the political opportunity paradigm to analyze my findings. As discussed previously in the literature review, this paradigm views social movements as non-state actors that work within the confines of the existing political order but still manage to advocate for or create change. Since 1985, Brazilian social movements have grown significantly at the end of the military dictatorship. As the government opened democratically, more political opportunities opened for civil society which over the last 15 years has played a greater role in the formulation of social policy and delivery of services (Mier, 2015). As a result, Brazil, and Rio specifically, have a strong network of social movements that have steadily increased their power and influence and formed diverse identities and group philosophies. I collected the data under this context and analyzed what I learned from the activists using the political opportunity lens. The activists that I interviewed for this project make demands within the existing political environment while continuing to advocate for change.

Chapter four analyzes the data collected from the survey and during the in-person and email interviews. The first section discusses how and why activists choose protest locations and reveals that the interviewed activists target very specific audiences and seek to create a strong visual message with the protest. The second section describes the techniques used to choreograph protests and finds that the interviewed activists carefully design the movement of the protest to send a particular message about the group's unity and to further welcome new participants. The third section discusses incidents of repression by law enforcement or by local government officials and demonstrates that activist leaders often creatively overcome setbacks or learn from their past vulnerabilities. Lastly, I summarize the information I received from email interviews with architecture

and urbanism professors to provide perspective from the professional community. The professors demonstrated consensus that planners must create democratic and accessible spaces for dissent but expressed disagreement on the approach to doing so. Overall, the data from the interviews and survey provide insight on the unique spatial, political, and cultural challenges that activists face in Rio and the different ways that they have solved these problems or remain vulnerable to them.

How and why activists choose specific locations for protests

One of the first patterns that emerged from the interview and survey responses is that activists strategically choose locations for their protest based on several factors including the anticipated audience, logistical considerations, and accessibility of the location. While some groups target exclusively local audiences specific to one neighborhood, others plan larger events that would garner enough media attention to gain a national and even international audience. An example of a locally focused group is Copacabana por direitos e diretas, which centers its activism in plazas, theaters and streets exclusively throughout the Copacabana neighborhood. Their two most important locations for events and meetings include the Praca Manoel Campos de Paz (Figure 5) and the Praca Serzedlo Correia (Figure 4) (Appendix, Figure 16). The selection of these locations is strategic, as the organizers aim to make contact with local residents rather than the international tourists that usually frequent the beach and the main avenue lining the ocean, Avenida Atlantica. The areas where the group meets are set back from the beach and normally host activities during local events that attract residents such as farmers markets. By hosting events in small plazas that already regularly have weekend

and weekday programs like farmer's markets, CDD presents themselves as a group that is closely integrated into the daily life of the neighborhood. Additionally, the organizers believe that by locating their events in more interior plazas, the group is better able to attract a more diverse crowd including young and old populations as well as the homeless who have been congregating in Copacabana in greater numbers (Kaiser, 2018) (interview; December 13, 2018).



Figure 4 Praca Serzedlo Correia, one of two main locations where CDD members host events and meetings. The pictured event was in informal type of “meet and greet” event meant to engage residents and attract new members. Personal photo: November 2017

Other areas of Rio de Janeiro certainly have a greater number of plazas and public spaces, especially the downtown or Centro neighborhood, but after years of decline the downtown no longer has the same concentration of people (del Rio, 1997: 56; del Rio, 1997: 21). Interestingly, the group also justifies the location of their events in smaller plazas by explaining that although Copacabana beach is generally regarded as a large public space, it has become more associated with conservative and centrist groups,

especially after the 2016 coup. Furthermore, many activist groups use the beach and the expansive avenue running parallel to it, to capture a more international audience whereas Copacabana por direitos e direitas wants to capture a local audience of Copacabana residents.



*Figure 5 Praca Manoel Campos de Paz, another location where CDD usually hosts larger events. In the picture, CDD hosts a lecture style event discussing the Feb 2018 military intervention
Personal photo: March 2018*

The organizers explained that Copacabana is not known as a neighborhood with a long political tradition but is composed of privileged, upper middle-class citizens, who in the past have leaned more to the right politically. CDD is trying to change this while also attracting other Copacabana residents or those who have had no previous experience or involvement in national or local politics to join their organization and become better informed on the various threats to Brazilian democracy (interview; December 13, 2018). The objectives of the group are long term, and they believe that so far, the protests and events that have been organized have successfully helped the group to gain visibility, attract more participants to their movement, and further politicize the neighborhood. As

the organizers explained to me, in their view, “If we are able to change just one opinion or open people’s eyes, then it is an achievement” (interview; December 13, 2018). In this way, selecting locations for their events is an important part of CDD’s strategy to achieve its goal of connecting with locals, politicizing those who were previously ambivalent, or transforming (or better informing) their views. Beyond this, they also make their activism more accessible to locals, who can stop by their event while doing their weekly shopping at a farmers market, engage in discussion, or simply listen to a lecture and take in the information. .

In contrast to CDD, another interviewed organization, Grupo Arco Iris, uses the expansive space of Avenida Atlantica to strategically broadcast its message to a national and even international audience (Figure 6). The gay pride march which they organize annually, takes place on the wide 8 lane boulevard which borders Copacabana beach (Appendix, Figure 19). To the organizers, the beach is the perfect location because it is the “postcard of Brazil” (interview; November 30, 2018) and events there are capable of garnering attention from a much larger audience than within the interior of the Copacabana neighborhood. Logistically, the large space is wide enough to host the hundreds of thousands of participants that the event currently attracts.



Figure 6 The annual gay pride parade in Copacabana, hosted by Grupo Arco Iris on November 19, 2017. Source: Faiola and Kaiser, The Washington Post, 2017

Because of the large audience that the space allows them to access, Grupo Arco Iris credits the annual march to facilitating its rise as the primary organization in Rio de Janeiro for providing a variety of resources to the LGBTQ population. Another reason why the large space benefits the group is that by protesting in one of the most well-known parts of the city the international attention that the group receives serves as a sort of protective barrier from the police, who are subject to the same international attention and possible scorn if they repressed the event violently. Although the pride event on Copacabana is very joyful, the reality is that Brazil is one of the most violent places in Latin America for LGBT individuals (Cowie, 2018). The celebratory pride event suggests that there is wide support for LGBT issues, even though it is still an issue that meets significant cultural and political backlash. By protesting in a highly public, highly visible place with the ability to attract significant global attention, the location of the protest protects the participants against possible repressive actions by the police. If the police were to react violently, images of the abuse of power on peaceful protesters would be

covered widely by the media and most certainly direct a significant amount of international scorn on the public security institutions of the city.

Overall, the neighborhood of Copacabana provides an important platform for both CDD and Grupo Arco Iris, and the different sizes of spaces allows each group to achieve their distinct goals. These responses support urbanist theories on the importance of creating public spaces of multiple scales throughout cities to support varying sizes of political actions or events (Hatuka, 2018; Project for Public Spaces, 2005). While Grupo Arco Iris depends on the expansive space of Avenida Atlantica along Copacabana beach to host an enormous crowd of participants and to attract an important international audience, CDD depends on smaller, more intimate spaces within the interior of the neighborhood to interact with residents and organize on a more local scale. This dynamic illustrates that public spaces of varying sizes are important for different activist groups and allows them to attract certain audiences that will help them to achieve their distinct goals. By accessing public spaces of different sizes, these groups can attract attention from audiences of associated sizes which helps them to spread their messages and gain visibility as a larger city-wide movement (Grupo Arco-Iris) or as a smaller scale neighborhood organization (CDD).

Marcha da Maconha also uses the beach as their chosen site of protest but uses another wide boulevard, Avenida Vieira Souto, which borders Ipanema beach, less than a mile southwest of Copacabana (Figure 7) (Figure 8). Their protest begins near the Jardim de Allah metro station which borders the very exclusive neighborhoods of Leblon and Ipanema, and proceeds toward the point of Arpoador, which is a small peninsula in between Copacabana and Ipanema (Appendix, Figure 21). Although the protest has taken

place at this location for many years, it has not always taken place in the same direction, as discussed later in the analysis.

Figure 7 (Left) The annual pride march organized by Grupo Arco Iris along Avenida Atlantica in Copacabana, showing the trios electricos, used as mobile stages for speakers and performers during the parade. Personal photo: November 2017



Figure 8 (Right) The concentration of attendees spilling onto the parallel street and sidewalk. Personal photo: November 2017

Organizers of the march chose this route for several reasons including tradition and the accessibility of an area that is well-served by public transit. The march which took place this year on May 5, 2018 was the 18th edition of the event (Brito, 2018) and according to the organizers, has always taken place at the same site. The accessibility of the location is mainly because Ipanema beach (and all the beaches within the Zona Sul) are highly developed public spaces with many amenities including public restrooms, nearby public transportation, meeting points, food and drink establishments, and public security resources such as emergency telephones. For this reason, the Marcha da Maconha group describes the beach as the most convenient location for a protest, because the space needs no added amenities to host a large group of people. This response reveals that the amenities and accessibility of the selected location are important factors for activist leaders when selecting a protest site, and that leaders will evaluate locations

based on their capacity to host the expected number of participants.

Protesting in a place that is well connected to different forms of public transportation and more convenient to reach because of their accessibility can also be part of a group's strategy to reach a particular audience. A respondent from the online survey, the Marcha Mundial das Mulheres no Rio (World Women's March in Rio), described their strategy to organize protests specifically along commuter routes to reach an audience of primarily working-class women. The group's most visible and well-known event is held in the Cinelandia area of Rio, on March 8th, the International Women's Day (Appendix, Figure 20). But outside of their main annual protest, the group tries to organize most of their events in proximity to Avenida Presidente Vargas, which is the main arterial street of the downtown (Appendix, Figure 15). This street connects to various forms of public transportation, including bus, metro, and a regional rail line. Because of this, cariocas can reach Avenida Presidente Vargas from nearly every point in the city and the surrounding suburbs. More importantly, commuters usually stop at or near the street to switch train, metro, or bus lines and continue their commute. For these reasons, protesting along Avenida Presidente Vargas and in the surrounding area would enable any group to gain significant attention and an important working-class audience who otherwise might not have time to attend an event outside of their commuting schedules.

This locational strategy aligns well with the Women's march mission to fight for not just women's rights but specifically advocate for policies that counteract capitalism and will combat poverty, *machismo*, and racism which the group views as connected societal problems. The group also indicates in their survey response that they will protest

in targeted locations if there is a need to publicly intervene or occupy a space or institution that the group is specifically challenging. In contrast to Marcha da Maconha which chooses a convenient protest site for the known participants that will join the protest, the Women's March in Rio chooses convenient protest sites in downtown Rio to potentially attract new members to the movement and to make it easier for working women to join their cause. By locating their protests in strategic areas along commuter routes, Marcha Mundial das Mulheres no Rio attracts a broader base of support throughout the year, culminating in their main protest of the year on March 8th, World Women's Day.

Location and the associated audiences with sites of protest are important for the interviewed activists and survey respondents in various ways. For some groups, the wide boulevards lining the city's iconic beaches are important for activists to reach a larger national and international audience for their cause. Attracting an international audience has a double importance for serving as a form of protection against the notoriously violent police forces of Rio, who would earn international scorn for repressing peaceful protesters. These larger sites also have built-in amenities and are well-connected to public transportation which helps the organizers to lower the barriers of participation and attract a broad base of support. For other groups, smaller locations allow activists to engage with people in a more intimate way and host more informative events that aim to politicize previously apathetic audiences. These examples show that public spaces of varying sizes are important to the diverse range of activist groups in Rio and help each group to send their message to the public. The responses also show that leaders select sites based on the existing amenities of the location and its capacity for hosting the estimated number of

participants. Lastly, spaces that are well-connected to public transportation and commuting routes help groups to attract new members and spread their messages to populations that may not have the resources to learn about a social movement outside of their normal commuting schedules, which are particularly ruthless in Rio de Janeiro (Byrne, 2013). The next section will discuss how the economic geography of the city challenges activists to use space in creative ways and reach audiences spread across a highly segregated and unequal urban geography.

The Challenge of Geography

While choosing a location to protest and its associated audience is an important part of the interviewed activists' strategies, a larger theme emerged related to the geographical challenges that activists face in selecting where to protest and determining who would best receive their dissent message. An organization that responded to the survey, Grupo Conexão de Cidadania LGBT de Favelas, advocates for the end of violence against LGBT persons living in the Maré favela, located in the northwest peripheral area of Rio de Janeiro. This group responded that they most often organize their protests in the most central parts of the favela, beginning in the Praça do Parque União and leading towards Nova Holanda, a major arterial street for the community. Interestingly, the respondent from this group indicated that if the group could change their strategy, they would protest in the center of downtown Rio along Avenida Brasil, one of the most symbolic avenues in the city and a traditional location for protest. This conflicts with another social organization from a favela that I interviewed, Marcha das Favelas pela Legalização, who indicated that they would never want to host their protest

in the central area of the city because they primarily want to reach other favela residents as their audience.

From the answers provided during the interviews, it became clear that the group faces challenges in gaining support for their cause within the favela and instead want to take their message to a broader audience who could sympathize more with LGBT individuals facing targeted violence in the favelas. Conversely, the Marcha das Mulheres group answered that if they could change their locational strategy, they would protest in the favelas since the greatest number of women who are affected by sexism and gender inequality reside in favelas, according to the respondent. The organizers of the Marcha das Favelas pela Legalizacao group take their protest activities directly to the peripheral areas instead of using the symbolic places of protest in downtown Rio or along the beaches (Appendix, Figure 18). This decision in itself is an act of protest, as the organizers believe they would face considerable repression by police if they located the protest in more central areas. It is also a strategic move, since the group's main audience are the residents of peripheral communities who they are aiming to further educate and inform how their community could be positively impacted if drug policies changed (interview: May 5, 2018).

These responses regarding location choice demonstrate the pervasive geographical challenges that activists face throughout Rio. Because of the city's stark economic divide, with nearly half of the population residing in peripheral areas, activist groups struggle to reach audiences that would either join their cause or be influenced by it. While some activist groups operating in the favelas want to take their messages into the zona sul to garner attention for injustices in their neighborhoods, activist groups based

in the zona sul want to connect more with favela residents to further politicize residents and broaden their bases of support. Although admittedly, all spaces might present limitations of some kind, the responses from these groups showed a desire to demonstrate in a completely different part of the city but because of organizational, financial, and physical barriers, they are not able to. These problems may be attributed to a lack of connection and communication between favela-based and zona sul-based activist groups but may also be attributed to the sheer difficulty that many favela residents face in traveling to the center areas of the city due to distance and the cost of travel.

The answers confirm the “dual-city” theory that within the context of a post-industrial economy, many global cities such as Rio have become more politically important on the global stage but have also created great wealth disparities within their centers (Fahlberg and Vicino, 2015: 2). Post-industrial economies with a lack of formal low-skill employment opportunities have exacerbated problems for the urban poor, increasing unemployment, under-employment and poverty. Because of this, increasing numbers of people are forced to live in peripheral areas that severely lack infrastructure and services, furthering preventing residents from accessing the formal economy. Violent non-state armed actors and criminal organizations fill a power vacuum and the continuous territorial struggle between them and the police create highly unstable and insecure environments for residents. As a result, wealthy city residents choose to distance themselves geographically and socially, and peripheral residents suffer pervasive prejudice (Fahlberg and Vicino, 2015: 2). These factors create cities that are, in reality, dual cities because the lived experiences of residents vary widely depending on their neighborhood and location. The dual city theory applies well to Rio de Janeiro, where

both the larger forces of globalization and local discriminatory policies (or lack of policies) prevent economic mobility and discourage residents in the peripheries from having a political voice (Fahlberg and Vicino, 2015: 7). The data collected from this research reveal the difficulties that activists face to protest in a dual city. While leaders strategically choose protest sites and target particular audiences, they still face major geographical challenges to communicate dissent and attract participants to their cause.

Another protest that I attended as an observer demonstrates well the geographic challenges that activists face to protest within a dual city. A group called Rocinha em Foco (“Rocinha in focus”) operates as a community organization in the favela of Rocinha, one of the largest in Rio de Janeiro with an estimated population of 180,000 (BBC, 2014). The group advocates for improved services for the community, such as access to running water, better public transportation, sewage management and trash pickup. Another major goal of the group is to use social media to show the day to day struggles of Rocinha residents and to demonstrate how their lives are negatively impacted by inadequate services (Rocinha em Foco, Facebook page). The protest that I attended took place on the evening of February 6, 2018 and the group’s strategy was to occupy Avenida Niemeyer, a busy two-lane highway that runs along the coast and links the border of Rocinha with the rest of the Zona Sul region, which includes the exclusive neighborhoods of Leblon and Ipanema. The distance of the protest was quite long, nearly 3 miles (5.5 km) to the edge of Leblon beach where the protest ended. Because of the long distance, the protesters were surrounded by supportive vehicles which also carried large speakers that could broadcast messages from different participants and leaders as they spoke on microphones to the walking crowd (Figure 9). What was striking about the

protest is that the design of the action, walking from the favela to the tree-lined streets of Leblon, demonstrated the cruel absurdity of the fact that such a large population lives in the harshly underserved favela while a privileged minority lives in luxury just three miles to the east. Another focus of the protest was to demand an end to the so called “war” that erupted in Rocinha between criminal groups and the police beginning in late 2017 (G1, *Jornal Nacional*, March 2, 2018). The security crisis contributed to an atmosphere of urgency for the protest and many participants wore black with signs demanding peace for the favelas.



Figure 9 Participants in the *Rocinha em Foco* protest walk along Avenida Niemeyer towards Leblon. The protest signs demand an end to violence and peace for favela communities. Source: *Rocinha em Foco* Facebook page

By using the space of Avenida Niemeyer and occupying the streets to block

traffic, the group sent a strong message that the residents of Rocinha are fed up with being neglected by the state and at the same time suffering the most violence from the police. By walking from the favela to the luxurious areas of the Zona Sul, the protest used both the physical and metaphorical space between the two lived experiences of Rio to send a message that Rocinha residents are not satisfied with the status quo and are suffering daily from the threat of violence. The space also helped the group to attract attention from the nearby high-rise apartment buildings, from the passing cars on the other side of the road, and from local and national media outlets. Overall, the protest seemed to send a strong message of solidarity from Rocinha and to put a human face on the toll of violence that at the time was reaching levels not seen in many years (G1, *Jornal Nacional*, March 2, 2018).

To summarize, the challenge of geography affects activists in Rio in different ways. For some groups, it prevents them from protesting in areas that would allow them to access audiences that might be more receptive to their cause. For others, the geographic inequality of the city prevents groups from reaching participants that are most affected by their issue. However, the challenge of geography is not always about distance as in the case of Rocinha de Foco, whose protest used the space between the starkly different living conditions that exist side by side in Rio. Overall, the uneven, segregated, and unequal geography of the city is at once a challenge for activists and serves as the basis for so many of the issues that activists organize around and continually plague Rio de Janeiro. The interviewed activists demonstrated that they use creative strategies to overcome this challenge or find ways to symbolize the problem of the dual city in their action.

Disrupting Spaces of Power

A more subtle yet essential part of the interviewed activists' strategies was to use symbolic spaces for protests or occupy areas associated with state power in order to send visually symbolic messages and temporarily disrupt places of social, financial, and/ or political power. In the case of Marcha da Maconha, marching along the symbolic spaces of Ipanema beach, allows the group to target a specific audience and challenge the given meaning of the space. According to the interview respondent, marching in Ipanema allows the group to access a politically and economically powerful audience which, because of the city's inequality, is mostly concentrated in the neighborhoods of Ipanema and Leblon (Appendix, Figure 15) (interview: March 6, 2018; "Students Speak", The Guardian, 2016). Locating the march in Ipanema allows the group to disrupt the symbolism of Ipanema beach, which is normally seen as an elite place where the privileged members of society spend their leisure time, by occupying the space in order to visually demonstrate that the issue of marijuana legalization has broad support. Additionally, the organizers always plan the annual march on a Sunday, which is traditionally the day of the week when the most Ipanema residents go to the beach, recreate, exercise on the bike trail, or frequent the many kiosk bars/ restaurants along the street. Because of this, the location and timing of the march enables the group to send a direct message to a highly concentrated and powerful audience.

Another example of the importance of symbolic space is a protest that I attended as an observer on Leblon beach (Appendix, Figure 15), which borders the most exclusive and high-priced real estate in the city. The protest was organized by the Brigadas

Populares, which is a national leftist organization with chapters in nearly every state in Brazil. Their main goals are to address urban reform, criminal justice reform, labor issues, and different types of discrimination. Their work primarily involves residents of peripheral areas of cities and for that reason, most participants are Afro-Brazilian. The protest on Leblon beach was designed as an occupation, and specifically for black bodies to occupy public spaces that are both implicitly and explicitly reserved for white bodies (Figure 10). The protest created a strong visual with a large group of Afro-Brazilians occupying and enjoying a beautiful beach that is normally filled with mostly white Brazilians on the weekends.

The central goal of the protest was to challenge what Leblon normally symbolizes in the city as an exclusive enclave for successful white Brazilians who continue to benefit from the country's history of racism and concentration of wealth. Through their occupation, the group also created a new symbolic meaning of the space almost as a reminder to the audience that by law, all beaches are public spaces not only in the city but throughout Brazil (Galante, 2012). In these examples, the symbolic nature of the protests reflected both internal and external reasons for protesting (Hatuka, 2011). In the case of *Marcha da Maconha*, locating their protest in Ipanema supported their external goal to confront a target audience of the wealthy and powerful upper class of the city. By occupying the exclusive spaces of Ipanema, the march was able to send a powerful symbolic message that marijuana legalization would not just benefit one sector of society but is actually a broadly supported issue, including families and religious groups, who use the substance for critical medicinal purposes. The *Brigadas Populares* who occupied Leblon beach also used symbolism to communicate a very powerful external message of

citizenship and belonging. At the same time, their use of symbolism also helped them to communicate an internal goal of solidarity among their members who were able to celebrate and enjoy one of the city's most beautiful beaches together, something that they might not have attempted individually. In these ways, symbolism helps activist groups to communicate internal and external aspects of their goals as organizations and helps them to achieve these varying objectives simultaneously.



Figure 10 The Brigadas Populares protest on Leblon beach. The black and red flags are the symbol of the group and makeshift tents were created with tree limbs and plastic trash bags to provide shade for the participants. Personal photo, 2018.

Another event that demonstrates the importance of symbolism is the series of protests that took place in the wake of the assassination of City Councilwoman Marielle Franco. I attended these protests as an observer and was informed of them through WhatsApp messages the night after the assassination and then through Facebook posts on the one, two, and three-month anniversary of Marielle's death. The first and largest protest

took place the day after the assassination on March 15, 2018 (Phillips, 2018) and involved thousands of people gathered outside of the City Hall building, where Marielle had worked tirelessly every day as a representative. The protest was particularly symbolic in this location because Marielle was unlike the rest of the city's politicians and represented a new generation of leaders for Rio de Janeiro. Marielle herself was a counter-symbol to the same breed of privileged, white, male politicians that occupy City Hall and have traditionally held most positions of power.

By protesting in front of City Hall, the protesters were both expressing their dissatisfaction with the current status quo and their repulsion that one of the few members of city council that represented the underrepresented, had been ruthlessly gunned down the night before. In the months following the assassination, the protests continued to take place in front of City Hall, though from what I could observe, the numbers of participants steadily dropped. However, the protests managed to send a strong symbolic message of solidarity behind Marielle and what she represented as a black female politician from the favela as well as a strong visual message demanding that the perpetrators of her murder be brought to justice.

These examples show the importance of occupying symbolic locations for protests in order for groups to be able to temporarily disrupt these places of power and create a visual image with the protest crowd that questions the previously agreed upon meaning of the space. . The next section discusses how activists choreograph the movements of protests within space to create powerful images that support their cause.

Choreography of Activism

Choreography is a significant factor in understanding how activist groups use space in creative ways, use their bodies to physically occupy a space, and structure their movements to send a message to participants and the larger audience. Different protest choreographies have been a particularly important element of protest design in the United States for the Black Lives Matter movement when protesters stage “die-ins” to highlight the history of black death and state impunity. Another example is the well-known chant “Hands Up! Don’t Shoot!” which is both voiced and performed by protestors as a symbolic plea to not be shot and a method to show solidarity with one another by raising their arms (Kedhar, 2014). The interviewees from this research project design their choreography within spaces that are designed by planners, architects and government officials, to represent the society’s civic identity (Hatuka, 2018: 107). Because of this, the movements of the protesters are juxtaposed with the setting, allowing the protesters to visually challenge and question the existing social order (Hatuka, 2018: 107-108).

The responses from the interviewed and surveyed organizations show that activists in Rio often structure their physical movement during the protest to symbolize an aspect of their dissent message or to better welcome and integrate participants into the group. One of the key principles of protest is the toleration of difference, meaning that organizers often accept a plurality of actors, visions, and strategies for social transformation and choose to limit or expand their membership in ways that will contribute to their mission (Hatuka, 2018: 269). During my interview with Marcha da Maconha, the organizers stressed that the most important aspect of the choreography of their march is that no single group or individual leads the procession (see figure 6).

Rather, the march presents a unified image by having several leaders from various marijuana activist groups lead the march together. The organizers explained that the choreography of the march is important to the overall spirit of the march, as they prefer to define themselves as a larger social movement rather than a singular organization. Marcha da Maconha is a coalition of smaller activist groups, each with an individual reason for supporting the legalization of marijuana in the city. Although the movement is unified by the overall goal of legalization, some groups specifically advocate for medicinal use to treat epilepsy and other serious conditions and view legalization for recreational use as a secondary issue. The group choreographed their march in a democratic way to send a message to the audience that even though their organization is a coalition of many smaller groups, they are a unified force that will continue protesting until drug policy is changed. The interviewee explained that because of this, the march is specifically organized in an egalitarian manner with multiple leaders (interview, March 6, 2018).

The desire to send a strong visual message of unity was echoed by Grupo Arco-Iris for the choreography of the annual gay pride march. They modeled the choreography on similar pride events in New York City and San Francisco which occur as cohesive marches that allow members of the public to walk together with the floats or other parts of the spectacle. The organizers in Rio purposefully designed their march this way after attending the pride march in Washington D.C. which uses a more traditional parade design where members of the public only watch the floats and spectacle from the sidelines. Grupo Arco Iris wanted to design their march



Figure 11 Marcha da Maconha along Ipanema Beach in May 2018. The picture shows how the march has no single leader but is rather a coalition formed by various interest groups, each holding their own representative banner. Photo Source: Carlos Brito, G1 Rio

in such a way that allowed the participants to feel closer to the event. In 2002, the group began using large electrified trucks (similar to semi-trucks in the U.S.) that host stages and multiple levels for both performers and participants. By

choreographing the event with an open format, the organizers create an accepting atmosphere that embraces the participants and allows LGBT cariocas to celebrate with one another, in public, along one of the most symbolic beaches in the city, Copacabana. To the organizers, the choreography of the pride march is strategic, and they benefit from these decisions as made evident by increasing numbers of participation every year (interview: November 30, 2017).

Another critical aspect of the pride march is that the organizers model the format of the event on the annual carnival celebrations, for which the city is known globally. This decision is also strategic as the organizers set out to create a carnival-like atmosphere that is meant to entertain and embrace the LGBTQ population which normally suffers in a city that is often culturally and politically antagonistic towards non-heterosexual populations. The celebratory atmosphere of pride events around the world is

not uncommon, but the Grupo Arco-Iris organizers claim this as a strategic move aimed to encourage the LGBTQ population to embrace activism and realize that they are not alone in their struggle for acceptance (interview: November 30, 2017).



Figure 12 Marcha das Vadias (March of the Sluts) takes place on Avenida Atlantica in Copacabana. The participants started in the middle of the long avenue and marched east for about one hour, as more and more participants joined. Personal photo: November 2017

The creation of a carnival-like atmosphere was similarly echoed by the Marcha da Maconha, who purposefully orchestrates a march rather than the nationally known Marijuana legalization rally that takes place in Sao Paulo every year. They credit this decision mostly to tradition but describe a march as more in spirit with the city of Rio de Janeiro, which is accustomed to street parties during carnival in which large swaths of people congregate in the streets and move toward a common direction (Figure 11). The sentiment of replicating a carnival-like atmosphere was also cited by Marcha das Vadias, which collaborates with an all-female percussion band that plays traditional carnival rhythms and performed during this year's march in Copacabana (Figure 12). The organizers justify their decision to create a joyful atmosphere as a tactic to attract more

people to their march and to become engaged in their activism. During my interview, the organizer from Marcha das Vadias stated the group's mission to "levar a política através do sorriso" (which translates as "to carry out political action through a smile"), meaning that by creating a fun atmosphere, the march can spark greater political interest and action (interview: March 28, 2018).

The goal of choreographing protests to reflect local culture and create a carnival atmosphere demonstrates another tactic that the interviewed activists use to broaden their bases of support. By choreographing protests to resemble street parties, activist leaders promote their events as social events that double as protests. In this way, the organizers are reducing the sacrifice on the part of the participants, who can enjoy the experience of the event while at the same time showing their physical support of the cause and adding to the group's visual message of strength and solidarity. These findings echo previous theories on the effectiveness of non-violent mobilization for allowing participants to take part in activism without disrupting their normal schedules or requiring a large commitment, or willingness to subject themselves to risk (Sharp, 1993: 32; Chenoweth and Stephan, 2011: 33-35). In these ways, choreography can help activist groups to occupy spaces in meaningful ways and attract more participants or more warmly welcome the existing participants.

Another example of how groups use choreography to send their messages of dissent is what I observed during the Fora Temer ("Out with Temer!") and Nao e Nao ("No Means No") protests that took place throughout the city on varying scales. Fora Temer was the popular slogan used by leftist activists and those opposed to the leadership of President Michel Temer, who became President of Brazil after the impeachment of

President Dilma Rouseff. The impeachment was widely regarded as a coup by liberals, who viewed the dubious claims of corruption against President Dilma as a ruse for grabbing power at a vulnerable time and replacing the Worker's Party with the more conservative PMDB party. What is striking about the Fora Temer movement is that the slogan became a widely dispersed protest tactic and was used as almost a rallying cry that unified liberals during various protests, including during protests that were somewhat unrelated to the coup. Those in opposition to Temer would also shout "Fora Temer!" during many celebrations, especially during carnival events, to broadcast dissatisfaction with the administration to a broad audience. In this way, the slogan became a way to ignite a protest or express dissent during any kind of public gathering and remind audiences of the popular dissatisfaction with the Temer administration and the way in which he gained power. The Nao e Nao protests were similar in that they became a dispersed protest tactic during carnival. Nao e Nao translates as "No means No" and the slogan was meant to address the widespread problem of sexual assault and harassment during carnival celebrations. Women (and men) would shout the slogan during carnival marches or use signs with the slogan, to remind the audience of the pervasive issue, to empower women to speak up and defend themselves, and most importantly to remind men of the crucial importance of consent (Figure 13) (Figure 14). In this way, these two widely used slogans became subtle acts of protest during public events and reminded the surrounding audience of important political issues even when the event was not related to political or social issues. The choreography of these dispersed vocal tactics allowed activists to send messages of dissent to a broad audience and remind the public of the viable opposition to the current administration or to antiquated conceptions of gender and

sexual consent.

Figure 13 (Left) A bloco or street party during Carnival 2018. The sign says “Folia e Luta” which means “Revel and Fight”. Personal photo: February 2018



Figure 14 (Right) A signs reads “No means no”, the slogan used to address the issue of sexual assault during carnaval. “Xô Crivella” is popular slang for “Hello Crivella” addressing the Mayor who cut funding for street parties in an attempt to prevent them. Personal photo, 2018

An important question related to the way that activists choreograph protests is whether the groups design their strategy to attract a greater breadth of supporters or a deeper level of support among their existing supporters. For larger groups such as Grupo Arco Iris and Marcha da Maconha, these groups aim for breadth of support to send a strong visual message that their causes enjoy broad appeal and will be a formidable opponent to those who work against their cause. For these groups, organizing a strong presence on the days of their largest marches is the most important part of their strategy. For smaller groups such as Marcha das Vadias, CDD, or Marcha das Favelas pela Legalizacao, the strategy of these groups is to primarily attract members that will be deeply involved in the group’s activities over the long term. Garnering a deeper amount of support is important for these groups so that they can remain legitimate and continue to advance and better organize their activities in the future. Deepening support is also important for smaller groups so that they can attract a strong base of committed

supporters who will influence the direction of the activism and help the group to reach a wider appeal than they would have if only the original members directed the group.

Attracting this level of support from a smaller group of people helps these organizations to continue fighting for their causes while retaining their legitimacy and slowly working to refine and more strategically achieve their goals.

To conclude, choreography is an important tactic for the interviewed and surveyed groups and allows them to send powerful messages to their participants and to the larger audience they are targeting. The next section discusses how the groups overcame challenges to their activism and the spatial strategies they used to avoid police repression.

Experiences of Repression or Societal Pushback/ Relationship with Police

Although most interviewees described a strong working relationship with the police, nearly every group had experienced some form of repression or institutional discrimination throughout their organizational histories. These past experiences shaped the current strategies of the interviewed groups and influenced how the groups organized their current protest efforts spatially and financially. Marcha da Maconha cited the most repression prior to the year 2011 when a Supreme Court decision ruled that the march was a legitimate political act (interview: March 6, 2018) (Noticias STF, 2011). Before this, the police often reacted violently to the march and viewed it as an illegal event, partly because many protesters smoke marijuana during the protest. Space was an important element in the backlash because the police would attempt to disperse the march by chasing protesters out of the street, trapping them at the beach or forcing them in the

opposite direction towards the interior of the city. Additionally, the march used to begin at Arpoador, a narrow point between Copacabana and Ipanema, but the police would often trap protesters as the march began and prevent the protesters from moving down Ipanema. As a result, the organizers changed the starting point of the march to begin near the Jardim de Alah metro station, as it does today (interview: March 6, 2018).

Although the interviewee now describes the group's relationship with the police as more peaceful and cooperative, their experience of repression prior to the Supreme Court ruling reveals that the police took advantage of the urban landscape to disperse, weaken, and intimidate protesters. However, this episode of repression also demonstrates the strength and influence of the judiciary branch in Rio, which has an important role in defining the opportunities that law enforcement can take to constrain and prevent protest (Hatuka, 2018: 80). After the Supreme Court ruling, the police no longer had the legal authority to use various means to stop the protest. Perhaps more importantly, the incident shows that the police obeyed the Court's ruling and refrained from repressing the event. However, the incident also demonstrates that when law enforcement does have the power to counteract protest, they can manipulate space, end the protest, and discourage support for the cause by intimidating participants and the audience. Marcha da Maconha was willing and able to learn from the repressive events of the past, change their choreography and reverse the direction of the protests, so that ultimately, their movement could continue. Overall, this case shows the importance for activist groups to consider their potential spatial vulnerabilities when planning a protest. Although it is difficult to predict and how and when a group might face pushback from the police, groups can benefit from considering how participants might safely exit from the starting or ending

point of the march. The case also shows that although many organizations in Rio choose to protest along the beaches, these areas might be most vulnerable to police corralling techniques since participants could be trapped between the road and the ocean.

Another group that described an experience of repression or discrimination against their right to protest is Grupo Arco-Iris and the annual pride parade. Despite the high attendance rate and general acceptance of the pride march, Grupo Arco-Iris explained that they still receive significant pushback during the organization phases. The most recent example of this is in 2017 when Rio's new evangelical and far-right Mayor offered no financial support to the long-established march and instead tried to charge the group R\$180,000 to use the space on Copacabana, a practice that the interviewee noted to be particularly unusual in Rio (interview: November 30, 2017). Grupo Arco Iris responded by refusing to pay any price to use public space and argued that their event was an important event, open to the public, and should not be charged to use a space that belongs to the public. The group also leveraged the estimated economic impact of the march, which the group cites as R\$140 million earned during the weekend of the event. Ultimately, the Mayor conceded to this point, and the event proceeded without paying any fees though the organizers still received no financial support from the administration, which in previous years they had greatly depended on (interview: November 30, 2017). Although this type of repression is not entirely spatial, it still represents how the state uses its power to limit activist groups and discourage protest. Importantly, Grupo Arco-Iris challenged the conservative Mayor's attempt to privatize and restrict public space though it is not clear if the Mayor conceded to this point or because of the event's estimated economic benefit to the city.

Despite the discrimination from the Mayor's administration, Grupo Arco-Iris explained that they maintain strong relationships with several branches of police, including: the security superintendent of Zona Sul (where Copacabana is located), the Guarda Municipal (Civic Guard), Civil Police, Federal Police, Military Police, and Traffic Police. The organizers describe their relationship with the police as "completely unified" (interview: November 30, 2018) and they have even started a successful partnership with them outside of the pride march to teach classes to incoming police officers on LGBTQ sensitivity and best practices for attending to the needs of transgender individuals (interview: November 30, 2018). Despite these positive anecdotes on collaborations with the city's law enforcement branches, my experience of attending and observing protests in Rio is that the police often play an aggressive role towards protesters but shift the ton of their action depending on what kind of group is protesting. For example, in November 2017 I attended a protest on Ipanema beach that was advocating for the end of economic austerity measures that the Temer administration imposed, and specifically a new policy that would raise the age of retirement by 5-7 years. The event was peaceful and involved a range of young and old participants. However, during the protest I saw a group of about 4 or 5 police officers patrol together as a unit and randomly approach and question people around the protest. When they came to a group of young people that were not explicitly involved in the protest, the police talked to them briefly and then an officer aggressively slapped one of the young men. As an outsider, I was struck that this action warranted little shock or outrage from other bystanders. In this case, the police were not directly trying to stop the protest, however there is an extensive literature describing the brutality of Rio's police (Munoz, 2018;

Maranhão, 2011; Muggah, 2016). Although the activists that I interviewed and surveyed described police abuse as a relatively small concern for their type of activism, this is in large part due to the limitations that I encountered while conducting research, which I described in the methodology chapter.

The experiences of the groups that I interviewed are not representative of the experiences of all activists throughout Brazil, many of whom experience surveillance and severe repression by the authorities (Peduzzi, 2017). The groups that I interviewed are also distinct in that they rarely cited disruption as one of their protest tactics, instead focusing on occupying spaces and peacefully expressing their message. It is important to remember that the data gathered for this research comes from a small group of activist groups and cannot be used to draw definitive conclusions on how space is used by the authorities to control protests in Rio, or how activists use space to challenge policing strategies. However, the experiences of these groups can offer some insight into the ways that activist groups can expect the police to use space to their advantage, consider their vulnerabilities because of this, and alter their strategies so they can more successfully communicate their messages. The next concluding section of this chapter discusses the responses from email interviews with local urban planning professors and professionals and their perspective on the limitations of the city's public spaces for hosting protests.

Interviews with Urbanism and Architecture Professors and Professionals

The last group that I interviewed includes 3 different professors from the Pontifical Catholic University in Rio de Janeiro (PUC-Rio), the second largest university in the city. All three of the individuals that I interviewed through email also practice

architecture and/ or urban planning in a professional capacity either for specific firms or as government consultants. The questions that I asked through email differed from my other interviews. The three questions that I asked are: Do you think planners and architects have a role in facilitating civil expression in public spaces? In what ways do urban planners and/ or architects collaborate with activists and different sectors of civil society in Rio? What are the greatest challenges that planners and architects face in creating viable public spaces in Rio today?

The responses received affirmed that indeed urban planners and architects in Rio de Janeiro have a fundamental role in aiding the city's population to express dissent by creating democratic and inclusive spaces. However, the interviewees differed in their opinions on whether urban planners should collaborate with activists and civil society to design such spaces. One professor wrote that in their opinion, urban planners must think on a very large scale and design spaces so that multiple types of encounters and events may take place. Though it is important in their view for spaces to remain entirely public and open to diverse segments of society, planners must work on a city-wide scale and not just collaborate with a few niche activist groups. Another professor disagreed with that view and wrote that one of their main aims as a planning professor was to better connect their students with various social issues so that they better serve future populations. They also described how today in Rio de Janeiro "there is an abyss between the world of public city management and the reality of the users" (Email interview: August 15, 2018). They explained that normally there is an individual appointed by the city to work with and mediate between the different NGOs and activist organizations. However, that position is currently empty. They add that currently in Rio there is a culture of hosting public

hearings and other participatory events, but they rarely produce policies that reflect the sentiments expressed by the public. In these two ways, the city is disconnected from civil society.

One common theme in the responses I received was an overall concern about security in public spaces and how the current public security crisis contributes to the disintegration of public life. One professor wrote that the current trend in local security policy is to increasingly use more confrontation and escalate violence. This presents real problems for public space as the state security forces increasingly militarize the city and take over urban spaces. The struggle to reverse this trend and return urban spaces to the people will be a long process. Other opinions attributed the demise of public space to the current economic crisis in the city which is causing the informal sector (meaning street vendors and homeless populations) to occupy and dominate public spaces. Because this has occurred on such a large scale throughout the city for some time, public spaces have become greatly damaged and less used by the population at large. The professor concludes that a greater dialogue is needed between different stakeholders to create circumstances that allow for a better coexistence.

This chapter analyzed the data gathered from the interviews with activist leaders, the online survey, and email interviews with urban planning professionals and academics. The main findings from the qualitative data include four themes related to the ways that space are important for activists and the protests they plan: selecting locations that help the group to target specific audiences; selecting locations that allow the protesters to challenge the agreed upon symbolism of the space; choreographing the movement of the protest to complement the group's message; and using space creatively to overcome or

challenge the city's unequal geography. The concluding chapter summarizes and further discusses the implications of the findings.

CHAPTER V. SPATIAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR ACTIVISTS AND PLANNERS

The concluding chapter summarizes the major findings from the research, highlighting what the experiences of Rio's activists are more broadly relevant for activists and urban planners in different parts of the world. The first section summarizes the most significant findings from the research and how they complement or contradict protest theories. The second section outlines how the findings may be relevant for future activists, and the third section suggests how future urban planners can use the research findings to create better spaces for protest. Lastly, I suggest ways that this project can be extended and improved upon in the future.

What do Rio's activists tell us about protests in urban space?

Throughout the course of this research project I observed the different patterns in which activists organize and perform protest in Rio de Janeiro. The first observation is that the activists that I interviewed reveal that their organizational decisions are highly strategic and carefully considered prior to the event. The organizers I met think about a multitude of factors before they protest including symbolism, logistics, how society might receive their message, security, and methods for recruiting more members to their group. This observation counters some of the earliest theories of protest which viewed acts of civil resistance as nearly spontaneous events or the result of chaotic mob rule (Jasper; 1997: 21; Tilly, 1998: 454). On the contrary, the groups that I interviewed and surveyed reveal that protests are usually planned over long periods of time and decisions are often made in a transparent and democratic way within the organization. The

interviewed and surveyed groups demonstrate that they formulate some degree of strategy before they protest and consider the different implications of their actions. This finding echoes the theory that non-violent mobilizations will be more successful in the long-term if they carefully plan their actions of resistance rather than spontaneously revolting against the source of repression (Sharp, 1993: 39-40).

The second significant finding from the research is that the location of the protest is important for three primary reasons: symbolism, targeting an audience, and the accessibility of the site. Symbolism of location was cited by nearly all of the interviewees and survey respondents as one of the first major issues that groups take into consideration when planning a protest. They consider how their group will appear occupying a certain space and the visual message they can send by simply being present in a location that represents the state or other oppositional force. This supports earlier protest theories on the importance of activist leaders to consider the symbolism of their action and how it can be used to most effectively mobilize a population (Sharp, 1993: 51). The second reason location is important is because it allows groups to specifically target certain audiences which are important to their demands or overarching mission. In the case of *Marcha das Vadias*, the symbolism of locating their protest on Copacabana beach is significant because Copacabana is exact location where sex workers operate most, a community that the organizers fight to represent and defend (Appendix, Figure 17). For *Marcha das Favelas pela Legalizacao*, the symbolism of hosting their events in the favelas and not in Zona Sul was a crucial part of the group's goal to mobilize favela residents and change popular opinion surrounding the no-tolerance drug policy.

Connecting with certain audiences also appears to be a significant challenge for

many groups, due to the city's spatial segregation. While some groups based in the favelas aim to take their protests downtown, other groups based in the Zona Sul cite goals to take their protests to the favelas and connect with a different targeted audience. Every location comes with an accompanying audience, and the interviewed groups demonstrated that they strategically consider this when planning events but are also continually challenged by the city's disparate economic geography. This finding relates to Chenoweth and Stephan's theory that non-violent mobilizations have the advantage of presenting lower physical and informational barriers to participants (2011: 33-35). However, in the spatial context of Rio de Janeiro, where populations and neighborhoods are separated by great distances and poorly connected by underfunded public transportation, participants in even non-violent mobilizations face physical barriers of accessing the site of protest.

Some groups recognized this barrier and planned accordingly by locating protests near public transportation and along commuter routes, enabling the interviewed groups to reach a greater audience and broaden their bases of support. These actions demonstrate that accessibility is another reason why location is important to the activist organizers. Despite the uneven geography of Rio, some areas are more convenient to travel to than others and this affects who will be able to attend the protest. Almost all of the interviewees cited accessibility, in terms of accessing spaces through different forms of public transportation, as a justification for locating their protest. Notably, this spatial strategy lowers the barriers of participation and allows people to join movements or learn more about an issue on their way home from work, for example, instead of forcing them to disrupt their normal schedules (Sharp, 1993: 32; Chenoweth and Stephan, 2011: 34-

35). Given the city's segregated geography, it is difficult to confidently declare one site as particularly more accessible since much of the population faces great challenges in travelling to the more affluent Zona Sul, where the majority of the observed protests took place for this study. However, the issue of accessibility is important to note because it was regularly cited by the interviewed organizers and reveal that they do consider how accessible the sites of protest are when formulating their activist strategies.

The last major finding from the research is that the spatial choreography of protest is an important part of how groups communicate information about their organizational structure and their demands. For example, Marcha da Maconha took careful steps to organize their march in a democratic way so that no single person or participating group would lead the entire protest. Instead they made sure that the different participating organizations had the opportunity to walk at the front of the march during the 1.5 mile stretch for the route (Appendix, Figure 21). Choreography is also important for sending a message to the participants of the protest. In the case of Grupo Arco-Iris, they wanted an open format for the pride event so that participants could experience the event up close and feel welcomed by the organization. In these ways, choreography helps to send both internal and external messages, ideally allowing the groups to simultaneously maintain their participation levels and recruit new members to the movement. This finding supports the current non-violent protest literature which argues that choreography can be an effective tool for activists to send a symbolic message of occupation, unity, hierarchy or vulnerability in space (Hatuka, 2018: 106-109).

The next sections will suggest how these findings may be broadly relevant to future activists and planners.

Relevance to Activists

This research may be applicable to the work of future activists by providing a case study on how activists overcome spatial challenges to effectively perform their protests, a very initial yet important first step in creating social change. The spatial dimension of public areas and access to them is an essential part to organizing and performing protest. Activists that focus too much on the particular message of their civil dissent might be unaware of the way in which the choreography of their protest affects the audience's reception of the message. Similarly, activists who are having trouble attracting more participants to their movement may reconsider the location or the protest's choreography to be more welcoming and accessible to the broader public. Activists that continuously protest in the same location may be inspired to rethink their strategy and re-locate their protest to alternative spaces where an entirely different audience may be reached. Similarly, activist leaders may be too focused on reaching a target audience of politicians without considering that another important audience to reach is people who might join the movement in the future if they are persuaded by the message. Because space and choreography play an important role in shaping the participant's experience of the protest, future social movements might reconsider their protest design and use techniques that will improve the protest experience, maintain strong participation over time, and attract new members to the cause.

Throughout the research, I observed several strengths of the interviewed organization's strategies, which activists in other parts of the world might be able to utilize. The first is that many of the interviewed groups were able to successfully plan and

organize protests as coalitions and not just singular groups. Civil society is vast and diverse in Rio, but many protests were organized by coalitions that were able to formulate unifying messages. This allowed the protests to send more clear and succinct messages of dissent and allowed each protest to enjoy a broad base of support and participation. The case that most clearly showed this is the Marcha da Maconha, which operates as a coalition of organizations that each advocate for marijuana legalization for either medicinal, recreational, or therapeutic uses. By combining these organizations, each advocating for their specific cause, the march could appear as a movement that enjoys broad support across the population and not just from young people who want marijuana legalized for recreation, for example. The second strength is that the interviewed groups made it easy for people to join their movements by locating their events in convenient locations and creating fun, lively, and highly social events where participants could enjoy spending their time. A case from the research that shows this best is Marcha das Vadias (March of the Sluts) which modeled their Copacabana march on the annual carnival celebrations. They included a lively all-female percussion band and many of the participants danced as they marched, while at the same time sending a strong message that machismo, femicide, and violence against transgender individuals must be stopped. Another case that demonstrated the importance of creating a celebratory atmosphere is Grupo Arco-Iris and the annual pride parade in Copacabana. The group designed the choreography of their event to embrace participants into the movement and create a brief sense of joy despite the often-harrowing circumstances that carioca LGBT individuals face.

The interviewed activist groups also organized both proactive and reactive events

throughout the year, which allows them to gain more credibility and steadily increase their support bases. The case that best shows this is Copacabana por direitos e direitas, which organizes monthly and sometimes bi-monthly events in the interior plazas of the neighborhood. This strategy is part of their effort to engage residents and inform them of how they can be more involved in the political process. These regular events help the group to steadily increase their base of support, which I noted as an observer to their events from November 2017- March 2018. However, the group would often quickly mobilize a protest event in response to a specific political event, such as the military occupation of law enforcement which took place in February of 2018 in Rio (Phillips, Feb. 16, 2018). This combination of proactive and reactive events allowed the group to steadily gain members over time and retain their legitimacy and activity as a group by speaking out against whichever issue was most pressing and threatening to the goals of their movement. Lastly, the interviewed groups utilize spatial strategies that help them to visually symbolize their goals and target crucial audiences. The case that best demonstrates this is Marcha da Maconha, which locates their annual march along Ipanema beach in order to perform their protest and speak about their movement to a politically and economically powerful audience of Ipanema residents. Another case that demonstrates this strength is the Brigadas Populares, who located their march on the exclusive Leblon beach to question the implicit and explicit symbolism of that space as exclusively for white bodies. By occupying the beach for the day, the group was able to visually symbolize their goal of demonstrating that the supposedly public spaces of Rio are in fact very exclusive in their character and should be more accessible for all.

I also observed several weaknesses of the interviewed groups and some ways that

they could improve their activism in the future. Many of the protests that I attended, seemed to be spatially vulnerable to nearby traffic which would pass closely by the protesters, leaving them vulnerable to either intentional or unintentional violence. I witnessed this most notably during the protests in the wake of the assassination of Councilwoman Marielle Franco. The protests on the one, two, and three-month anniversary of the murder occurred in downtown Rio and would begin with a march towards City Hall. During the march, the protest would often move into the streets where cars were at times waiting in traffic or moving at a fast speed. The protests occurred without any official support from traffic police and there were no supportive vehicles surrounding the participants. This experience led me to believe that the protest could be spatially vulnerable to either intentional attack using a vehicle as a weapon, or unintentional pedestrian deaths. This vulnerability is especially important because of the increase in the use of vehicles as a weapon (Gelinias, 2018). Secondly, because the protest groups were often geographically prevented from reaching certain audiences or gaining participants from certain sectors of the population, the interviewed activists could use strategies of simultaneous, dispersed action where several protests take place throughout the city but under one mission (Sharp, 1993). The case from the research that best demonstrates this is Grupo Conexao G Cidania LGBT who lamented the fact that their activism suffers from the difficulty of protesting in the historic downtown areas of the city where they could access a larger audience. Similarly, other groups such as Marcha das Mulheres described their difficulty to reach audiences in the favelas. If these groups could organize dispersed, simultaneous protests with partner organizations in different locations, the groups could reach multiple audiences and perhaps grow their bases of

support or attract media attention for their mission. Overall, the interviewed and surveyed groups demonstrate use of space in creative and strategic ways to stake claims, make demands, and receive recognition. Future activists may use this research as a glimpse into the struggles and strengths of the interviewed groups and see parallels in their own organizing strategies. The next section will review some ideas on how the findings may be relevant for urban planners in the future.

Relevance to Urban Planners

Current and future urban planners may find the observations of this research relevant to their work. As urban planners, our goal is to create places that support vibrant social activity, which will inevitably include acts of civil resistance at some point in time. This is an important consideration that many planners of public spaces might not fully realize during the design period. A possible solution to remedy the current disconnect between public spaces and protest is for urban planners to focus more on creating a mix of formal and informal public spaces that could support protests by civil society organizations of varying sizes (Hatuka, 2016). While some of the interviewed groups used traditional sites of protest in the historic downtown area or along the beach, other used smaller public spaces within neighborhoods to organize more intimate, informal, and educational events. Most importantly, urban planners in many international contexts need to realize the political role that their work plays or will play at some point in the future. Since the built environment influences where dissent occurs (Rafail, 2016), planners who shape the built environment have an indirect yet important effect on how protests play out in cities (Hatuka, 2016).

Some strategies for better facilitating protests in public spaces include enacting policies that will expand space at popular protest sites to better accommodate larger groups. The example from the research that best demonstrates this point are the series of protests after the assassination of Marielle Franco. The night after her murder, thousands of people gathered in front of City Hall in the Cinelandia region of downtown, one of the most iconic places for protest in the city. The outrage over Marielle's death spurred thousands of people to gather at this location and from my vantage point, appeared to soon overflow and spread into nearby streets. Although the demonstration was spontaneous (Phillips, 2018) and the scale of the protest was much larger than the average event that takes place in front of City Hall, the space serves as an example of a place that continually hosts large protests that often overflow into the surrounding streets, blocking vehicles, causing traffic, and endangering the safety of the participants at the same time. By considering ways to extend the space in areas where large protests can be expected (in front of institutional and symbolic buildings), planners can help activists and regular citizens to more easily and safely express their dissent.

Another potentially impactful way that planners can create better spaces for activists is by ensuring that existing public spaces are well-programmed so that they are used more often and by more people during non-protest events. This will help to create more places that sustain constant community participation and engagement so that when protests occur, people feel comfortable and willing to frequent those public spaces. A case from the research that shows this is Copacabana por direitos e direitas (CDD) which organized small scale events throughout the interior plazas of Copacabana which normally host public events such as farmer's markets. Residents of the neighborhood

were accustomed to frequenting these plazas and might even walk by the event hosted by CDD during their normal commute or shopping time. By locating their event in an area that already hosts regular community programs, CDD was taking advantage of a space that already captures a strong audience from the community. Part of the role of public space planners is to create well-programmed and well-used spaces, but the finding from this research illustrates that this goal may also contribute to making better places for expression of civil disobedience. The next section reviews ways that this research can be improved in the future.

Continuation of this research in the future

As briefly discussed in the methodology chapter, this research can be continued and improved upon in the future. Future efforts to continue this research can continue to expand the amount of data by interviewing more activist leaders from different areas of Rio de Janeiro to gain a more global perspective on the spatial challenges that affect the city's protests. Alternatively, to capture a more in-depth, ethnography-based perspective, future research efforts could focus on just a few activist groups to more closely understand how they use urban space. This approach might be more effective for understanding the internal dynamics within activist groups that decide on spatial strategies and where to locate their protests. Instead of the online survey which produced limited findings for this project, future researchers could host charrette style focus groups with groups of different activist leaders. This could facilitate greater discussion between activist groups on the different spatial strategies or challenges that they encounter. By using visuals and maps during the group interview, the researcher might gain a deeper

understanding of how activists design their protests in space. Overall, any future endeavor to improve and build upon this research will benefit from expanding the study group and gathering qualitative data from more sources.

APPENDIX

Figure 15 Neighborhoods and Regions of Rio de Janeiro

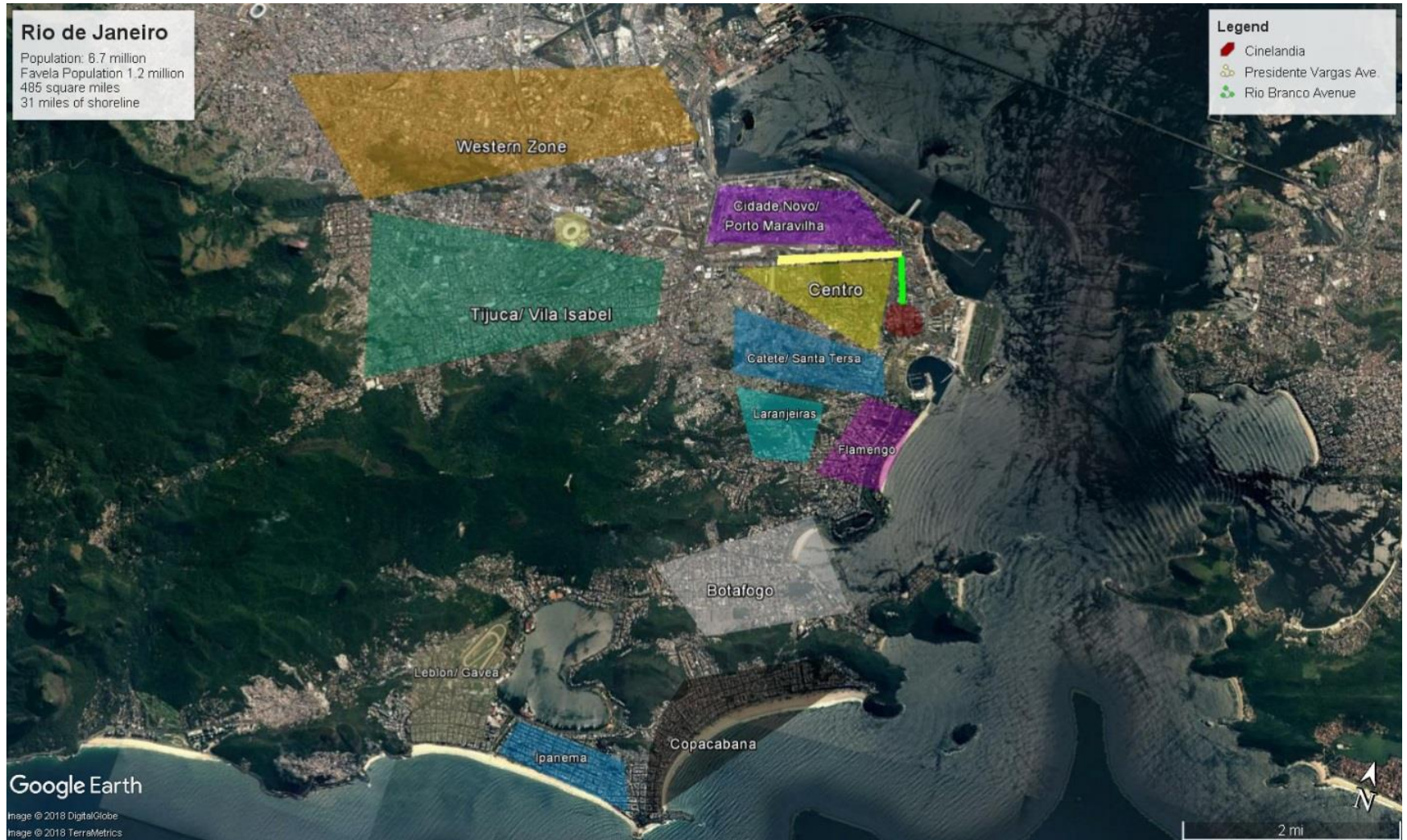


Figure 16 Copacabana por Direitos e Direitas places of protest



Figure 17 *Marcha das Vadias* route of protest in Copacabana



Figure 18 Neighborhood or protest for Marca das Favelas pela Legalizacão in relation to downtown Rio



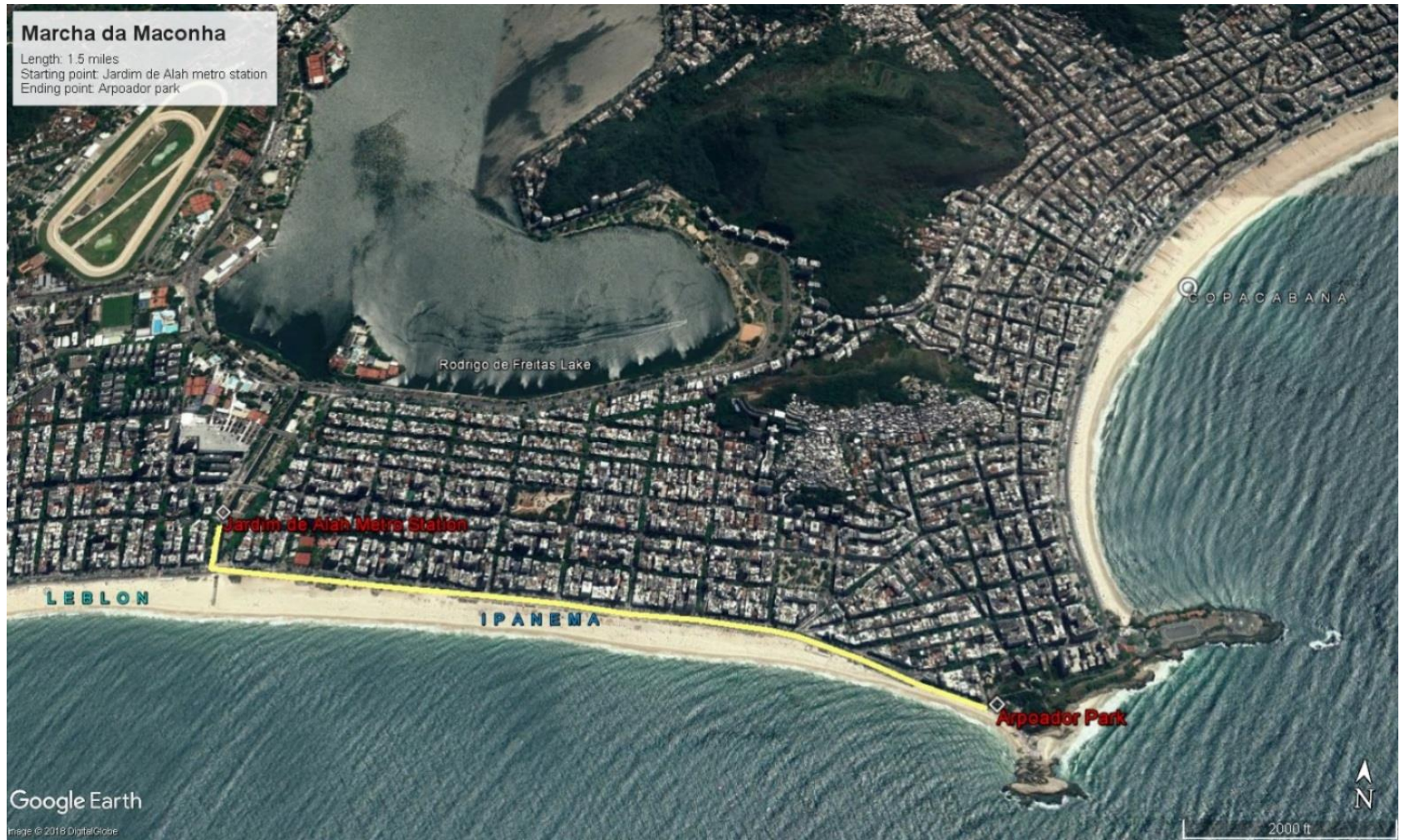
Figure 19 Route of protest and location of activity for Grupo Arco Iris Pride March



Figure 20 Route of Protest for 2018 Women's March



Figure 21 March for the Legalization of Marijuana, Ipanema



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