

Listening to Young People in Research Films

Paulo Cesar Rodrigues Carranoⁱ

Ana Karina Brennerⁱⁱ

ⁱUniversidade Federal Fluminense (UFF), Niterói/RJ – Brazil

ⁱⁱUniversidade do Estado do Rio de Janeiro (UERJ), Rio de Janeiro/RJ – Brazil

ABSTRACT – Listening to Young People in Research Films. This paper presents the trajectory of a research group dedicated to the production of knowledge on youth living in grassroots areas in the context of research film production. Two films are described and interpreted with particularity emphasizing the devices used to start a dialogue focusing on the narratives of young people about themselves, their contexts of life and their sociability through images and sounds. The filmic representation is not to be taken as a *portrait of the real* but rather as the reconstitution through the selection, translation and edition of the product that one wants to share with the audience. The interviews are dialogic narratives and they are the structuring elements of the production of films intended to present the complexity of being young.

Keywords: Youths. Narrative Interview. Documentary Film. Social Representation. Grassroots Environments.

RESUMO – A Escuta de Jovens em Filmes de Pesquisa. Apresenta-se trajetória de um grupo de pesquisa dedicado à produção de conhecimento sobre jovens de espaços populares no contexto de produção de filmes de pesquisa. Dois filmes são descritos e interpretados com especial destaque aos dispositivos utilizados para colocar em diálogo as narrativas de si e contextos de vida e sociabilidade de jovens através de imagens e sons. A representação fílmica não se confunde com um *retrato do real*, mas, em vez disso, é reconstituição através da seleção, tradução e montagem do produto que se quer compartilhar com o público. As entrevistas narrativas concebidas em bases dialógicas são elementos estruturantes da produção dos filmes que buscam apresentar o ser-jovem em sua complexidade.

Palavras-chave: Jovens. Entrevista Narrativa. Filme-Documentário. Representação Social. Espaços Populares.

Introduction

The use of images and sounds in social research based on the narratives by young people has fostered the understanding of the life cycle. This cannot be characterized in a unitary way for every and any juvenile reality; instead, it is made up of a diversity of situations and conditions of living the time of youth.

The movies approached in this article were produced by a research group established in 2001 which, since 2004, has made documentaries as products of studies undertaken. The first research film that was made – *Jovens no Centro* [Young people downtown] – depicts the experiences of young visitors to a youth center located in the city of Niterói (RJ). It is the result of a case study that was part of a nationwide research intended to make an inventory of the representations of local managers from 74 cities in Brazilian metropolitan areas (Sposito, 2007).

The whole production by the research groups adds up to 13 films covering issues related to schooling and other educational processes, young people's biographical itineraries and black grassroots cultures; two of such films discuss the schooling in African countries. The major investment has been to investigate ways of life and biographical itineraries of youths from both urban and rural grassroots ambiances¹.

The theoretical foundation of this article has sought to highlight some interpretative axes. The first one was to make it explicit that the concept of ways of life (Lobo, 1992; Guerra, 1993) is seen as an analytical alternative to the recurring use of thematic and parceled approaches in studies about young people. Another concern was to emphasize the understanding that working with images cannot be taken as a way of *documenting* reality, as it is rather a representation, as Becker (2009) puts it. As to meeting the subjects of the study, it is understood as a *comprehensive interview* (Kaufman, 2013) in a dialogic context (La Mendola, 2014).

The two films we selected to substantiate this article – *Bracuí: velhas lutas, jovens histórias* [Bracuí, old struggles, young stories] and *Jovens do Palácio: cinco caminhos* [Youths from the Palace: five paths] – depict different moments with films in our research itineraries. They also express different ways of life: those of young residents in slums and their circulation in the territory, and the ways of life of young residents of quilombos and their appropriations of the territory in the interface with traditional cultures. The narrative interviews were the major support to these film-studies.

Thinking collectively the screenplay and showing the film's characters its first editing for adjustments according to the perception of the individuals is also a constant practice in the research films we have made, having occurred in both the films we deal in this article.

Research with Young People Beyond Thematic Boundaries

Research on juvenile identities focusing certain topics (culture, work, leisure, schooling etc.) has been dedicated, to a large extent, to

fragmented aspects of the youths' lives, and unconnected with broader contexts of their existence. Investigating *ways of life* (Lobo, 1992; Guerra, 1993) of young people in their relations with spaces-times of their territories of existence has allowed to expand the understanding beyond the studies outlined by topics, which provides more complexity to the analysis of the objects being investigated (Carrano, 2008).

Juvenile realities are experiences of relationships, social plots, open opportunities, lived interdictions and narratives about segregations in multiple experiences of spaces-times. Social practices may be added up to a comprehensive concept of education, since they include in their own cultural dynamics the formation of values, exchange of knowledge, and ultimately the very constitution of subjectivity.

A frequent research issue with which we have been dealing concerns the search to understand how young people build their lives when moving around the neighborhood and the city and how, being part of different social networking and *practices of space*, they develop their conditions of being young. In our opinion, the notion of territory is not enclosed within the socio-spatial limits of the place where the youths live. Accordingly, *community* is not to be taken as the unique social space of reference, since unveiling young people's way of life means to adopt the perspective of an expanded community compliant with itineraries, sociocultural mediations and networking settled in multiples territories. The inventory, the description and the analysis of biographic traces, as well as personal and collective paths, may enable not only to build knowledge about biographies and dynamics of collective juvenile action, but also contribute to unveil significant parts of the complex *actors' play* (Telles, 2006), which may involve NGOs, social movements, governmental projects, charity activities, associative networks, relations with churches, political parties, the subtle borders between legal and illegal; in short, there is an enormous and complex mosaic which configures the social fabric of the grassroots spaces, and social research is required to reconstruct it analytically.

The Social Represented by Images and Sounds

Any description of social facts brings in itself ways of representing these very facts. Thus, it can be said that we face an illusion every time it is considered that a type of representation – maps, photographs, films etc. – is identified with a *seizing what is real or a portrait of reality*.

For Becker (2009, p. 25)

[...] facts are not generally accepted by everybody, they are accepted or rejected by certain audiences to which their proponents present it. [...] When we make an account about society, we do it to someone, and the identity of that person affects the way we present what we know and the way the users react to what we present them. Audiences are different – this is important – in what they know and in what they can do, in what they believe and will accept, based on their trust or some kind of evidence.

What Becker intends is to warn about the existence of *worlds* of producers and users of representations. Representations are, therefore, an inter-subjective encounter between producers and their audiences.

Considering that the *work of science* is to transform objects so that they may be used to demonstrate what the scientist wants the others to understand, we are in the face of a process that involves observation, analysis and enunciation. That is why it is not appropriate to say that the *forms of representation* are *portraits of reality*.

It is in this perspective that what we call *research film* has a delimiter of origin, that is, we are seeking to ascertain social realities and represent them to specific audiences, although they may be multiple and even *non-scientific*. Attempting to escape the idea of mirroring what is real, some authors have developed the notion of *non-fiction film* instead of *documentary film* (Plantinga, 2014). Moviemaker Amir Labaki wished to emphasize the perception that the reality is not *documented*, but *represented* according to whom expresses such reality when he coined the term the *everyone's truth* (Labaki, 2015).

There is an author's work when a film is produced. This work requires both selecting what one wants to represent and translating and producing an array that allows users of representations to understand what is being represented, so that they set their own interpretations. For Becker (2009), each means excludes a great deal of reality, each way of representing is a way of selecting, which leaves out several constitutive elements of what one wants to represent. And "[...] every means excludes everything that happens after we ceased our representational activities" (Becker, 2009, p. 32). In a nutshell, the audiences to which representations are aimed to do not deal with reality itself, but with the reality translated by the product that encloses the representation which the author wished or could give to his work.

The Research Film in Search of Narratives by Youth People

Research films may be limited to an *expressive function* in which the important thing is to *pass on the message* by using portions of the interviews to communicate results. It may also expand its perspective by committing, in its own conception, production and editing, to an *analytical function* (Bertaux apud Guerra, 2006, p. 34) in the use of narrative interviews, images and sounds in the context of the *comprehensive analysis* (Kaufman, 2013; Bertaux, 2009).

Thus, we took a perspective of using films interpretatively in which the editing of four documentaries places on the line what was possible to advance in the analytical plan considering the dialogue between guiding concepts of the studies, the method of approach and dialogue with the individuals appearing in them and the empirical material produced in the field of investigation. Aligned with such perspective, our movies use significant parts of the interviews, images and sounds capable of suggesting concepts, in addition to make evident the

presence of the fieldwork team in the different phases of the research. This perspective contributes both to highlight the findings and to demonstrate the methodological paths and analytical and ethical choices which enabled the edition of the sequences of images and sounds.

Investigation data are highly referred to the observation of spaces, to the reading of the images produced and to the transcription of the in-depth interviews we have conducted. In our view, the movie is not only a methodological support for the field research, but it is intended to be a mediator between the scientific community, the individuals taking part in the study and broader audiences interested in the issues and contexts of investigation of each one of them.

It is possible to say that the research film synthesizes the problems of investigation in the form of documental images and sounds following a script and edited afterwards. We have realized that this work allows a more direct and simpler way of communicating the results of the investigation to different audiences, as well as making it easier to create a field of reflexivity between those who do the research and those who are researched. The documentary is then, at the same time, a means of observation, of documentation, of provocation and the possibility of increasing the levels of reflection in all stakeholders of the investigation process.

Marco Bombarda (1996), using the film as a support to the research on youths, points some of its potentials as a tool for understanding and dialogue. *The film as a means of observation* represents a useful tool available to the researcher to observe the juvenile world, as well as their verbal and non-verbal practices in their own places of encounters and sociability. Observation brings elements that may make it more complex or even contradict what has been collected through the interviews. *The film as a means of documentation* implies the possibility of adding up a significant number of hours of images and sounds generated when a research movie is being shot to the collection of other images that can be revisited, problematized under other viewpoints and yield new visual, academic, institutional products or those for the use of the very social actors seeking for more reflectivity about the actions. *The film as a means of encounter* enables to organize moments of reflection about the practices of juvenile groups. This creates important spaces of reflection and confrontation between experiences based on what has been observed and recorded during the research process. *The film as a means of disturbance or strangeness* allows the audiovisual media to bring several possibilities of causing impacts, awareness and reflections about the *naturalized* social processes. Resources associated with the rhythm of the editing, sounds and the composition of images may turn into *dialectical images*² (Benjamin, 2006) capable of causing feelings and new ways of thinking.

The Interviews

In our production of studies in the form of documentaries we have sought to highlight the narrator's point of view to make it easier for the young people being interviewed to access their own space of narrative style. The interpretative search is guided by *analytical inductions* (Kaufman, 2013), which set correlations between the ways of life and the biographical itineraries. The interviews activate memories, stimulate the narration of oneself and of contexts of existence and make up a field of interaction, a *biographical space* (Arfuch, 2010). The quest for the narrator's point-of-view gives priority to the relationship and makes the interview get closer to a situation of conversation that does not accept the imposition of strict scripts, minimizing the "[...] violence of the situation of interview" (Bourdieu, 1997). That is how we intend to establish fields of relationship between the researcher and his/her interviewees in the context of a conversation.

We share the view of Salvatore La Mendola (2014) on the importance of low directivity in an interview as a condition to build dialogical relations. Doing research on dialogical basis is an effort of giving life to the encounters, acknowledge that the agents involved – the researcher and the other(s) – identify themselves as two persons, as a *self* that meets a *you*, that is, it is about giving life to a relationship. A requirement to conduct a dialogical interview is not to anchor it on pre-shaped categories of analysis. Questions should lead the interviewee to narrate frames of relations and experiences, a situation rather different from that where the interview is placed as an informer responding to an enquiry. The interviewer should attempt, at the same time, to focus and to be open along the ritual of the interview, which means to listen, be in touch with the representations expressed by the other with no classificatory urgencies. La Mendola, an Italian sociologist, compares the ritual of the dialogical interview to a two dancing partners: each one needs to take his/her own space and, at the same time, make room so that the other one can move. The lightness of an interview does not emerge from the arguments, but from the style of interaction that must go beyond the separation between the researcher and the person being researched, that is, the purpose is to narrow the distance between them.

The individuals, through their lived accounts, allow the researcher to reconstruct contents of life. The accounts bring the memory of the past to the present in a process of revisiting filtered by several categories of analysis.

Narratives by Young People in Two Research Films

Analyzing a movie requires, first, to *disassemble* it, that is, an inverse movement of making it. It does not mean, however, that along this process all analytical possibilities are tackled, either in its conceptual, methodological or technical elements. For Francis (1994) it is necessary to choose a device to observe the film in question. The observation de-

vice that we have selected in this paper is to review the process through which images and sounds were produced and how they were edited in the films. The construction of the encounter with the youth gains importance as there are significant markers in the shared making of the scripts, conducting the narrative interviews on dialogical basis and in the field of reflexivity created when the final editing of movie is presented to participants.

Bracuí – Velhas Lutas, Jovens Histórias [Bracuí, old struggles, young stories] (43')

The film³ was shot in Angra dos Reis-RJ, in the quilombola community of Santa Rita do Bracuí, which is located near the Rio-Santos highway. Since the 1960s residents fight against land-grabbers and luxury private condominiums to remain in the lands they inherited from their ancestors. Old and young residents share memories, experiences and projects and join to achieve the land deeds to be taken as a quilombola territory and to devise options for community development. The accounts reveal the process of setting black and quilombola identities in which contradictions are inevitable, and it is not experienced the same way by everybody. In the inter-generational dialogue, both male and female youths from the quilombo show their commitment to the heritage which involves the continuity of the struggle and the renewal of the culture of *jongo*⁴, a sort of dance.

To make this documentary, the film crew, consisting of Youth Observatory researchers, M.A. candidates and undergraduates, spent seven days accommodated in a house rented in the very quilombo of Bracuí. In those days, the narrative interviews were conducted with young people who appeared as the new actors of the struggles for the land and for the quilombola identity. The film showed that such identity was still under construction since the word quilombo itself only recently became part of the community's repertoire. We walked together with the youths in some of their everyday activities and they indicated, to be interviewed, adults and old people who they considered to be significant for the historical community struggles.

The first move of the research film took place in a community meeting where the theme and the proposal of a shared making of the documentary's screenplay were presented. The movie was shot a bit later than one year after the film *Sementes da Memória*⁵ (Memory seeds) was released, which also portrayed young quilombolas who practice the *jongo* dance. *Sementes* was shot in the community of Quilombo São José da Serra, located within the city of Valença-RJ. The community has houses concentrated in a place within the quilombo's territory and their lifestyle is basically rural. Images were captures of youths waking up before dawn to go to the farming work, weeding of small crops of beans and vegetables, and to collect thatch that is still used to cover some roofs in the community, for houses made of stucco. The movie was seen by members of the Bracuí quilombo before the arrival of research-

ers and, as a result, during the meeting such members raised a question related to the life of the youths in the community: *it is useless to show young people weeding and farming. It is a false image*, said one of the girls attending the meeting. A grown-up leader continued: *[It is important] to show the diversity of the place and the difficulties face by the youths. [...] People think that a quilombo is a place where the houses are one next to the other, in a great piece of ground, as if it were an indigenous people village. I say we are a different quilombo*. Participants expressed the wish that the documentary would show the particular aspects of that place and their lifestyles, not what had been established as common sense of what a quilombo looks like. The peculiar feature of the Bracuí quilombo is the fact that it is in the border between urban and rural, so that the family units have been spread all over the territory which is also occupied by holiday houses and not quilombolas' houses. The common desire was to see the multiple identities of the young people going back and forth everyday between rural and urban environments depicted, to show hybrid forms of sociability, associated with labor, culture, and entertainment.

There was surprise among both the youths and the older leaders in relation to our interest in having, as the main purpose of the film, the young people as special subjects of the research in a tradition-based community where the listening actors are generally the older generation, those who are the guardians of the tradition and holders of the community's experience. We were interested, however, in getting to know how the youths related to the traditions of that place and how they developed their juvenile identities in relation to that tradition. The old community leaders, indicated by the youths, were heard with the purpose of reconstructing the historical fights of that territory, to understand how the young people updated those struggles, as well as the way the elders perceived the collective agency of the new generations concerning the persistent problem of land ownership and possession of land deeds and the emerging issue of the quilombola identity.

Artificial situations were avoided in the interviews and, for such, they were conducted in the times and spaces of the youths' everyday activities: their homes, outdoors, in the building that served as a shelter for the *jongo* workshops with children, in the church. It was highlighted that being a quilombola is an identity under construction and, for the youths, the struggle for the land is a heritage from the elders that they took for themselves and updated in the context of new legal framework and the enhanced fight of the black movements on behalf of their racial identity. Young people had a sense of belonging to the community, they were determined to live there and were engaged in updating and carrying on the fight for the land; all this makes us understand the very concept of what a quilombo is and comprehend that, in Bracuí, land is a value passed on from one generation to the next. People have to deal with the tensions caused by land speculation, so strong in the area, and with the impact of this logic onto the life of several quilombo residents.

In the accounts narrated by the elders, there is confidence that the new generations are being capable of taking the old struggles fur-

ther, and their greatest challenge is obtaining the land deeds. An adult leader, who lives outside the community but keeps close emotional ties and political support with it, said the older ones are *handing over the baton*. A young woman, whose father is one of the oldest and most outstanding leaders in the community, created a *jongo* phrase honoring such hand-over: *I came here, my father told me so, daddy is too old, he is a black sufferer*. Her father in turn sentenced *This is a quilombo!* His struggle was through rural trade unionism, but he never recurred to his quilombola territorial identity, grounding his struggle on the right to own the land due to his status of rural worker. The quilombola identity is a contemporary enunciation which has been activated by the youths, which makes it possible to re-signify the identity of being a rural worker as it is the case of the older residents.

One of the interviewees, a woman who has been an old rural leader in the community, expressed doubts about the word quilombola, which confirms how fragile this collective identity is, still under construction in the moment when the film was being shot. In any case, when asked about being a quilombola, she said she did not know the meaning of the word very well, but mentioned that one of the young female leaders would be able to explain it better. And she added a comment about the symbolic and political place where her communal identity is settled: *I consider myself a quilombola because I'm in the middle of it all, the jongo [...] thus, I'm a quilombola*.

Young and old people did not take part in each other's interviews, it was only when the film was screened they would listen to what had been said. The way the documentary was edited showed a certain quilombola identity, still in the making, whose main assertive vector was in the collective juvenile agency.

When the movie was screened to the community, not yet finally edited and for gathering impressions and opinions about the editing, criticism was that the film did not tell correctly the history of the community, since it did not show the Rio-Santos road. An old leader said the road was a key element in the struggles fought by the community, as the road divided the families, which were located in one side or the other of the road: those living near the beach and those living on the hills, and the beach residents were forced to move out due to the strong land speculation in the area. It is part of the community's collective memory the confrontations which, along the 1970s, residents held against the road builders and the *land grabbers* that came with it. The criticism was absorbed and in the final editing there appeared, together with the narration of an old leader, images of the Rio-Santos road in the point near the entrance to the quilombo.

One of the film devices narrating through image is the display of sequence plans of the road to the quilombo showing *for sale* signs in properties located within the territory. These images express the difficulty the local movement finds in ensuring the territorial identity. Accordingly, images of the high-middle class condo called *Porto Bracuhy*, homonymous to the community name, located in lands previously oc-

cupied by quilombola families, are evidence of how fragmented is the territory and how much intense are the disputes regarding the land.

Jovens do Palácio – Cinco Caminhos [Youths from the Palace – five paths] (57')

The first two minutes of the movie present five young characters, with images showing not only some of the everyday situations but also, altogether, forming a mosaic of spaces and situations depicted along the film: work, study, care of children, religiosity, get-together parties with friends and free-time activities.

The film *Jovens do Palácio – Cinco Caminhos*⁶ was shot based on interviews that were recorded on a weekly basis with each of the five young characters, called *semanários* (weeklies). It is the outcome of a study which conducted an inventory of the ways of life adult youths living in a slum in the city of Niterói, Rio de Janeiro. Once a week, each youth paid a visit to the university, where the research group used to meet, with the purpose of narrating what had happened along the previous week. Youths were between 20 and 28 years old when they took part in the study, conducted in 2009.

All youths involved had previously participated in projects conducted by the Niterói Museum of Contemporary Art – MAC. The four young men were in the Environmental Action Art Project and the girl participated in the first activities of the *Comuniarte* project. All of them lived in the community named *Morro do Palácio* [The Palace Hill], located in the museum's surroundings.

Before starting the weekly sessions where each young person told about their everyday life, he or she would draw a map of their circulation around the city, emotional spaces, workplaces and entertainment. Youths were asked to use different colors to draw places identified with different activities: entertainment venues, places they had to go regularly, places they liked to go, including other spaces they deemed significant. The first interview was conducted around the description of the map made, so the spaces were presented together with their meanings and usage. A second interview, of biographic nature, was conducted with a semi-structured script seeking to get to know the youth's walk of life: family and school life, work experiences, how they spent their time etc., in order to construct *sociological personal portraits* (Lahire, 2004). Next, six weekly interviews would follow, with an open script, to record the accounts of each young person about their activities along the previous week. To make remembrance of the key events easier, each youth was given a notebook that could be used to write down facts they considered important to be narrated in the weekly interview. Every young participant was suggested to tell what had happened along the week, if something unusual had occurred, what places he or she had been to and the meaning of events he or she had described. Of interest were both the narratives of everyday routine and those on an *extra everyday* basis (Pais, 2003) in order to form a field of reflexivity. Over the six weeks of

weekly interviews – in hours scheduled according to the time available by each youth – observations were made and some of the activities mentioned were monitored: going to work, going to school, religious activities, among others.

By the end of the weekly encounters a discussion group was conducted with five youths. Together, they reflected upon the process involving research, the weekly account of their everyday activities, what everyone had found out about their own itineraries of life and about their transit within the city through their networking.

At the moment of the weekly talk, by recalling the events taking place along the past week, youths re-signified what seemed to be merely trivial in their daily routine, which usually was unnoticed. One of the challenges in the methodology of the weekly interviews was to bring up the significant dimension of everyday life which, for the youths, seemed unimportant. They also mentioned the way the research became part of their daily routine as they started to realize that these or those events and facts could not be forgotten, they had to be narrated in the following encounter. These narratives allow to perceive the self-reflectivity that was unleashed as a result of the methodology we had proposed and they had accepted.

A device used in the film to put the youths' narratives in dialogue with the significant spaces of existence was to conduct film shootings in places the youths had pointed as important and which defined them as subjects. Young man Marcão (28 years old) affirmed in the interviews his black identity, which comes up in his networking with hip-hop, street basketball and the *Charme* dances. He showed to be proud of his professional identity as an electrician at MAC, the place which had welcome him through a social project since he was a teenager and which introduced him into the world of art when he had the opportunity to provide lighting for the exhibits of the museum, getting in touch with artists and curators. Another outstanding feature of this youth is community life, which can be seen in the collaborative work of self-construction with friends for a *puxadinho* [an added room] in the backyard of his mother's home. The representation of the biographic traits that emerged in the narratives was introduced in the film through scenes of the self-construction work, street basketball and the backstage of his work as an electrician in the museum.

The account given by Jeferson (20 years old) expresses his strong territorial anchorage in the community where he lives and which he defined as relations of confidence and friendship what he would not be able to get somewhere else: *Here is my Palace*. Another significant dimension emphasized in his narrative was his work as an instructor of paper recycling, a trade he learned in the aforementioned social project he had participated at MAC since he was a teenager. The device of film follow-up recorded, through a sequence-plan, his work as a teacher in the Psycho-Social Center for alcohol and other drugs abuse users in the city of Niterói, with a special highlight to the steps of paper production by the Center's patients under his educational action. The communi-

ty dimension was displayed in the film through the visit to his house where, from the top of the slab, he presents his extended family whose homes are spread out in a wide field in the hill: *Here is the backyard*.

For Mauricio (24 years old), the networks of family anchorage and friendship go beyond the Palace Hill. In the neighboring city of São Gonçalo lives his grandmother and it is there that he settles a second home, which he says is a shelter that allows him to be far from the risks of getting involved with the drug trafficking and police raids in the area. Another dimension of his narrative is when he emphasizes his schooling as a support to achieve less painstaking jobs than, for instance, being a truck loader. These are the representations the film intends to configure in images and interviews conducted at the night school for youth and adult education (EJA) and in the route between São Gonçalo and Niterói filmed at roadside and within the bus.

The account by Isabela (20 years old) brings out her family life and evangelical religiosity. A widow when she was 17, mother of a 3-year-old boy, unemployed and depending on her mother and the child's paternal grandparents for financial support. By taking part in the *Comuniarte Palácio* project, she got in touch with visual artists who encouraged her expectancy of making on art, especially because she was able to get hold of the technique demonstrated by one of the artists in the project of handbags made of recycled plastic. The film follow-up device with Isabela showed her doing her art at MAC, in the occasional and precarious job of waving a flag during the electoral campaign and taking care of her son, which involved throwing his birthday party and the blessing she received by the pastor in the church she attends.

Telto (24 years old) claims the significant presence of the church and social projects as key elements in his life; he defines himself as a missionary in charge of rescuing youths in the context of violence within slums controlled by drug trafficking. Such rescue, he thinks, is done by means of either a religious faith or social projects. The project he was involved with at MAC turned him into a social educator, hired by the museum and by a social organization located in Rio de Janeiro. His work as an educator expands his networking and his urban circulation. Another life dimension is related to his involvement with rap and with a music group that uses scraps to make their own instruments. The visual representation of spaces with which Telto was involved in the city was shown through a tour he took to the so-called *prayer mount*, a ritual place where he says he is closer to God. The film also added his presentation of the ambience where he does his job in the education sector of MAC, when he showed photographs and neo-concrete objects produced and kept as memory of the social project he participated in when he was a teenager. The music written by the group he was part of appears not only as the expression of his participation in the group, but also as the sound track of the film and a linking element between the accounts by the five youths.

The editing of the movie sought to highlight the fact that there was a *crescendo* in the youths' reflexive activity. From the initial difficulty to

narrate their own everyday life, because they considered it obvious and void of significant content to deserve being mentioned and commented, to the perception that the daily routine encloses possibilities of thinking over their own course of life.

Closing Remarks

The investigation on the itineraries of youths and their usage of the territories allows to enhance the knowledge of social networks that configure space and are the aids or obstacles in their transition to adult life. That is why the study of biographical journeys may turn out to be another way of questioning reality. Our work with research films has allowed to see how heterogeneous are the situations of social groups and the biographies that, to a large extent, disappear from the general explanatory frameworks.

Regarding the place of the research film in educational investigation, the article contributes to a broader definition of this tool within the global interpretative framework. A film is presented not as documentation of reality but as a medium between real and what is represented, with heuristic potential. Editing the movie in close dialogue with the concepts that organize the research and the analytical categories emerging from the empirical material is ultimately an exercise of interpretation and analysis. The film is thus a relatively autonomous product even if linked to other classical products of investigation, such as articles and reports.

The films mentioned here are study cases and, as such, they do not intend to represent the world or provide generalizing explanations; instead, they are meant to contribute with elements that may serve as indicators of new universes of reference. Our theoretical/methodological orientation seeks to look into the juvenile ways of life in an attempt to balance the game of scales that is played between the general plan of the social structures and the sociological *zoom* that goes down to the individual dramas and biographical singularities. Singular stories re-established through narratives are placed in relation with processes that develop in the broader socio-historical context.

Audiovisual records reduce the distance between the concreteness of the original context being investigated and the abstraction of the analyses. The point we have tried to make is that, in terms of the goals this research has been pursuing, in addition to capturing images and sounds, editing and publicizing the film, there is the author's work which makes what is screened not coincident with the original context being researched, but expressing a representation, among so many others possible, about what has been researched.

A film presents itself as a privileged instrument to enhance the viewpoints about the local realities investigated, as well as a space of transit between the investigation problems and the public demands for rights and the experience of participation by young people. Thus, the documentaries we have produced are doubly determined as they are, at

the same time, product of investigation and an instrument that facilitates encounters, communication, and dialogue.

It is under this perspective of establishing an understanding relation that we met the people with whom we have dialogued. A guidance that was always present during the interviews and in the editing of sequences of images and sounds is to set a non-violent perspective that would result in *narrations of oneself* understood as a production of a field of symbolic interaction. The *biographical space* created when the interviewer encounters the interviewee is not ready beforehand, it is rather produced and may be de-constructed along the encounter. It is capable of producing knowledge and acknowledgment and proximities, but also distances and estrangement between individuals situated in different social positions. The issue that one must deal with in the encounter is the ethical challenge of taking into consideration and care of what to do with words said by the other.

One of the singularities brought to the educational field by this article may be in the description and analysis of the experience of participation by youths in the research films. They have allowed young people to think over their daily lives due to the strategies created to set dialogue-based encounters and the interpretation effort that provides the participants in the study with an active role. The closer approach that films enable with the material of the actors' own existence, both through their narratives and through the images of their everyday life, are provocations for the exercise of reflexivity, especially in the dialogue they establish with the representations we make of them in the films.

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Notes

- 1 All films can be viewed in the research group's video channel. Available in: <<http://www.uff.br/observatoriojovem/v%C3%ADdeos>>. Accessed on: 13 Aug 2015.
- 2 Walter Benjamin comprehends the dialectical images as a proposition to think the images and the ways to rethink history as incision and interruption rather than just linear and positive evolution in time.
- 3 The film can be viewed on the uffTUBE website. Available in: <<http://ufftube.uff.br/video/S9HNA8MNBU6G/Bracu%C3%AD-velhas-lutas-jovens-hist%C3%B3rias>>. Accessed on: 13 Aug 2015.
- 4 *Jongo*, also known as *caxambu*, *tambu* or drum, is characteristic of some black communities in southeast Brazil. In its *fundamentals*, there is the presence of two or more drums, of a circle of dancers and singers and of couples who take turns in *quase umbigada* the center of the circle. The *jongo* circle works as a choir that repeats verses from those who *place issues*; these may narrate everyday life, religiosity or politics. This *jongo*, initially limited to male adults, has changed in time and space and ensured children, youths and women to

come into the circle, both because its practice was secularized and to ensure the conservation of culture which otherwise would die with its last old practitioners.

5 The film can be viewed on the uffTUBE website. Available in: <<http://ufftube.uff.br/video/N923USA5NDX9/Sementes-da-Mem%C3%B3ria>>. Accessed on: 13 Aug 2015.

6 The film can be viewed on the uffTUBE website. Available in: <<http://ufftube.uff.br/video/K6B2DY1R6W2O/Jovens-do-Pal%C3%A1cio--Cinco-caminhos>>. Accessed on: 13 Aug 2015.

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Paulo Cesar Rodrigues Carrano is a Permanent Professor in the Education (PPGDEU) and Culture and Territorialities (PPCULT) Graduate Programs at UFF. Coordinator of the Rio de Janeiro Youth Observatory Research Group/UFF and a scholarship recipient of Fundação de Amparo à Pesquisa do Rio de Janeiro (FAPERJ).

E-mail: pc.carrano@gmail.com

Ana Karina Brenner is an Adjunct Professor in the School of Education at UERJ. Researcher of the Rio de Janeiro Youth Observatory and a member of the Lifelong Research & Learning Group: subjects, policies and educational processes.

E-mail: anakbrenner10@gmail.com