Impact case study (REF3)

Institution: London School of Economics and Political Science

Unit of Assessment: 21 - Sociology

Title of case study: Supporting bottom-up development in cities in the developing world

Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: 2009-2015

Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:

Name(s):	**Role(s) (e.g. job title):**	**Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:**
Sandra Jovchelovitch Jacqueline Priego-Hernandez	Professor of Social Psychology Research Assistant/Officer	1995 to present 2010-2015

Period when the claimed impact occurred: 2013-2020

Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? No

1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words)

LSE research in favelas has demonstrated the importance of community-level actors to achieving United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goal (SDG)11 - to make cities inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable. It has had impacts at three levels: **International**: the research has changed understanding and influenced the strategic approach taken by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) to working with bottom-up social organisations. **National**: country impacts have been felt primarily in Brazil, where the research has promoted the inclusion of under-represented groups in policy-making. **Community**: the research has been used by grassroots organisations to change self-understanding, self-esteem, and support bottom-up social development in some of the world's most challenging cities. Its participatory, community-embedded nature has also built participants' capacity to enhance inclusive urbanisation.

2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words)

Stigma, violence, and social exclusion present significant barriers to UN SDG11 - to "make cities inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable" by 2030. LSE research led by Professor Sandra Jovchelovitch has investigated institutional, social, and psychological determinants of trajectories of self and community in the favelas of Rio de Janeiro **[1]**. The research has shown that: i) the competencies and skills of people living in poverty should be recognised and leveraged **[2]**; and ii) as creative innovators of bottom-up social development, local grassroots organisations are central to achieving UN SDG11 **[3]**. Bottom-up social development here refers to actions conceptualised, incepted, developed, and led by members of the local community. The research draws on sociological forms of socio-cultural psychology to theorise human development. It builds on work by Jovchelovitch on the social psychology of community and the public sphere, social representations and culture, participation, and social change (e.g. **[4]**). Key contributions are outlined below.

Pioneering a participatory research partnership. The LSE research team pioneered the first inter-institutional, international research partnership bringing together universities and UNESCO with the charitable foundations of the Brazilian Itaú Bank and local favela NGOs (AfroReggae and Central Unica das Favelas (CUFA)). The favela NGOs held a dual role as both partners in the research and research participants. Throughout the project, from the establishment of the partnership to its multi-method design, to its implementation and dissemination nationally and internationally, the research was co-produced by all partners, drawing on their different expertise in multiple dialogical iterations **[2] [5]**.

Improving understanding of human development and social regeneration in favela communities. The work conceptualised the critical significance and complexity of institutional interactions for human development; it also provided new evidence about the particular institutional frameworks that shape individual and community development in the favelas **[2]**. To that end, it elucidated the role of the drug trade as provider, legislator, and organiser of everyday life, offering a parallel system of behavioural codes, as well as a "professional career" for youth. It also showed that favela NGOs act as "parents by proxy", competing directly with drug gangs to provide role models and opportunities for young people. Strong social cohesion and feelings of belonging and attachment to place make the favelas places of

high "sociability" (as conceptualised by Simmel) **[2]**. This was found to be both a protective factor for individuals and a driver of self and community development **[3]**.

Systematising characteristics of bottom-up models of social development used by favela organisations. The research showed that the unique characteristics of a new type of favela-born NGO (of which AfroReggae and CUFA are examples) are vital to social development, including in terms of making cities resilient and sustainable **[1] [2] [4]**. These organisations operate at multiple levels and hold multiple identities - as social movements, entrepreneurs, artists, activists, and social workers. Their members are local people who share other residents' experience of growing up in a favela community. In contrast to "mainstream" aid programmes, bottom-up organisations do not come from outside and do not withdraw from intervention sites once their objectives have been fulfilled. They develop in, are led by, and remain in communities **[1] [2]**. They take a three-pronged strategy involving: i) a combined focus on the individual and the community; ii) use of the arts and imagination to reinvent social representations of themselves, their position in the city, and their future; and iii) action on internal city borders through everyday dislocations, increased mobility and innovative partnerships with business, government and international organisations **[1]**. Favela NGOs were shown to play an important role in creating positive action for change **[2]**, acting as a "stand-in" for myriad institutions including the state and even the private sector, as well as the family. They support the development of skills, organise employment, and promote a new set of positive representations of the favelas, of favela-dwellers, and of the city as a whole **[1] [3]**.

Conceptual innovations: The LSE researchers defined these provisions as "psychosocial scaffoldings" - actions and structures supporting human development at individual and social levels **[2]**. Traditionally and principally associated with the nuclear family, the work showed that psychosocial scaffoldings are also provided by social institutions and NGOs, making them key sources of resilience in contexts of adversity **[1] [3]**. This has important implications both for the theoretical understanding of the sociological foundations of human development and its psychology, and for the development and implementation of social policy. The research evidence strongly supports the inclusion of bottom-up local NGOs as partners in designing and implementing public policy supporting more inclusive cities **[1] [5]**.

A toolkit for change. Further collaborative research drew on these insights to produce a toolkit of concepts and methods for implementing bottom-up social development **[6]**. Produced by LSE with UNESCO and favela organisations, it has been validated through participatory workshops in the favelas and dialogue meetings with academics, activists, and policy-makers. It is widely used by UNESCO, governments, and grassroots organisations to build and expand bottom-up social development in Brazil, Latin America, and beyond.

3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)

[1] Jovchelovitch, S., Dedios-Sanguinetti, M.C., Nogueira-Teixeira, M., and Priego-Hernandez, J. (2020). Imagination and Mobility in the City: porosity of borders and human development in divided urban environments. *Culture and* Psychology, 26(4), pp. 676–696. DOI: 10.1177/1354067X19899064.

[2] Jovchelovitch, S. and Priego-Hernandez, J. (2013). *Underground Sociabilities: Identity, culture and resistance in Rio de Janeiro's Favelas*. UNESCO. ISBN: 9788576521808. 29,911 downloads from UNESCO and 4,943 from LSE (total 34,854) from 2014 to 2018.

[3] Jovchelovitch, S. (2015). The creativity of the social: Imagination, development and social change in Rio de Janeiro's favelas. In Glăveanu, V., Gillespie, A., and Valsiner, J. (Eds.) *Rethinking creativity: Perspectives from cultural psychology* (pp. 76-92). Routledge. ISBN: 9780415720540.

[4] Jovchelovitch, S. (2019). *Knowledge in Context: Representations, Community and Culture*. Classics Edition. Routledge. ISBN: 9781138042896.

[5] Aveling, E. and Jovchelovitch, S. (2014). Partnerships as Knowledge Encounters: A psychosocial theory of partnerships for health and community development. *Journal of Health Psychology*, 19(1), pp. 34-45. DOI: 10.1177/1359105313509733.

[6] Jovchelovitch, S. and Priego-Hernandez, J. (2015). *Toolkit: Bottom-up social development in favelas of Rio de Janeiro. Paris and Brasilia*. Available at blogs.lse.ac.uk/toolkitsocialdevelopment/view/toolkit/ under a CC-BY-SA 3.0 IGO license. Outputs **[1]** and **[5]** are published in internationally peer-reviewed journals.

4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

The novel research partnership described above supported sustained interactions between favela residents, NGO leaders, academic, governmental, and international organisations. Its findings leveraged the contribution of community-level actors to making cities safe and inclusive in support of SDG11, and provided UNESCO, national governments, and favela actors with new tools to help realise this goal. The concept of psychosocial scaffoldings described in **[2]** is now used by both UNESCO and favela organisations to guide their interventions. Use of the toolkit **[6]** by UNESCO, national governments, and activists and practitioners has also generated impacts at international, national, and community levels.

International impacts: supporting the development of more inclusive policies for cities. UNESCO was a key research partner **[2] [5]**. The research has since had important conceptual impacts on the approach taken by both UNESCO and many of its partners to developing more inclusive policies for cities. The toolkit **[6]** has been an important mechanism for this. It has been used by UNESCO to systematically propose and incorporate bottom-up models of social development and disenfranchised citizens' knowledge into its own activities, including in interventions with national governments in Latin America and in UN international meetings. It is now also a key resource of UNESCO's Inclusive Policy Lab, whose tools are used by NGOs and development practitioners around the world, as well as by UNESCO's own staff. The toolkit is particularly used in Latin America but also, increasingly, the Middle East. Copies were published in Spanish (500), Portuguese (100), and English (100), alongside a complementary microsite allowing users to access the full content online. The microsite is fully mobile-responsive, allowing users to easily access materials from any device via the LSE and UNESCO portals. Between 2015 and 2018, it was accessed more than 10,000 times, with 2,200 full downloads from LSE Research Online **[A]**. According to the Director of UNESCO's Brazil office:

"…we distribute [the toolkit] *in all our new partnerships with regional and municipal governments in Brazil…we use [it] in our relationship with NGOs, so that they can also learn and benefit from the methodology and various tools that it contains… Finally, we use it in our south-south cooperation, with Lusophone African countries such as Angola, Mozambique, Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde. We translated it to Spanish and English, which allows the toolkit to travel to many other countries we collaborate with."* **[B]**

UNESCO has also used the approach developed through the research in its Management of Social Transformations programme, which supports sustainable and effificent policy dialogue among the academic community, policy-makers and practitioners **[C]**.

Together, the research, toolkit, and associated events have helped UNESCO establish: "*a whole new set of international collaborations that can amplify the Brazilian experience and take it to other similar contexts of development…Many colleagues in our HQ in Paris know the work and use it with our member states, which are today 193 countries"* **[B]**.

National impacts: more inclusive partnerships with community organisations. UNESCO has also been proactive in applying research insights in developing partnerships with community organisations in Brazil. The concept of psychosocial scaffoldings has particularly informed changes in their understanding and approach, having:

"…changed how we saw these organisations, the concept was fundamental for us to understand the relevance of the processes it refers to in the favelas and other Brazilian communities we work with…Your research influenced our work strategy with bottom-up social organisations… [and] qualified our work with similar NGOs…[It] also influenced our project development processes for new [private and state sector] partners." **[B]**

In Brazil, changes informed by this shift in understanding include UNESCO's use of the partnership model described in **[2]** and **[5]** to develop more inclusive networks for change:

"The research… led us to take up this model of inter-institutional partnerships… [It] influenced our process of developing projects with new partners in the private sector, such as…with Pretrobras for capacity-building of NGOs, and also what we are doing now with the federal government and the Ministry for Citizenship." **[B]**

Promoting the inclusion of marginalised voices in national policy. The work has also helped to promote a new, shared understanding in Brazil of the value of incorporating citizens' knowledge in the formulation of national governmental policy. It catalysed the inception and implementation by the Brazilian government of new, joint platforms to better include favela citizens and grassroots organisations in policy formulation and debate.

In September 2015, Brazil's Department for Social Development and Fight Against Hunger (MDS) worked with UNESCO and the Brazilian Mission at the UN on a new policy on "Urban Poverty and Development in Brazil: the periphery at the center of the post-2015 agenda". This was launched at a seminar in the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) Chamber of the UN Headquarters in New York. Representatives of CUFA, one of the two favela organisations involved in the research, participated in that event and in the development of the policy, which represented an important plank of Brazil's (and UNESCO's) work towards SDG11. CUFA's role was extended to support the inclusion of previously marginalised voices in the development of wider policy programmes. According to the then Secretary of State for Social Development and Fight Against Hunger:

"We had a rich programme of collaboration and exchanges with LSE, which had real consequences for us. It led the Ministry to develop a closer relationship with strategic actors for Brazilian social development, not only at the local but also at the national level. We became active in working with them and making sure that our policies towards the SDGs… focused on the importance of having the representation of favela communities. The expansion of peripheral voices in our structures and policies was strengthened by the research; for example, we incorporated CUFA as active participants in our programme 'Brazil without Extreme Poverty', a massive plan of action involving 18 ministries. The research facilitated the inclusion of these peripheral actors from the favelas of our large cities in the programme of actions of the Ministry. Together we moved forward in understanding that voices and everyday life expertise are absolutely needed for inclusive social development." **[D]**

The wider impacts of the research on inclusive development in Brazil are acknowledged in an unsolicited letter from the then Director-General of UNESCO. Commending the LSE partnership with UNESCO, she particularly recognises the contributions of **[2]** and **[6]** to helping "*drive forward the values and objectives we share"* **[E]**.

Community impacts: building capacity among community organisations. The research has supported capacity-building among community organisations and NGOs in Brazil in several ways, including by helping UNESCO to "*rethink the importance of developing our policy for capacity-building in civil society organisations"* **[B]**. The toolkit **[6]** and a blog, Favelas@LSE, provide useful stand-alone resources in this context, but the research has also directly enhanced capacity in grassroots NGOs engaged in bottom-up social development. Their participation provided new opportunities for these often marginalised and under-represented groups to meet and speak to policy-makers, urban planners, governments, and other NGOs in the global South (and, indeed, the global North, with CUFA having subsequently established offices in New York and Madrid).

It provided new forums for communication across these groups and generated a new, shared understanding of the value of incorporating citizens' knowledge into policy formulation. CUFA's participation in the launch of the new urban poverty and development policy (see above) allowed them to contribute to high-level policy discussion in exactly the ways recommended in **[2]**. Their CEO, Celso Athayde, explains: "*From the moment we have a partnership of this kind…we are seen in a different way. We start to have more power, more space to speak, and to be heard in a different way"* **[F]**. The policy launch event was recorded and made publicly available, in part to provide a model for other governments and NGOs interested in pursuing closer collaboration.

According to Athayde, participation in the research: "*gives us self-esteem, and the partnership with these organisations… means that we are building something that is relevant and changes people's lives*" **[F]**. Its provision of a co-generated, research-based conceptual vocabulary of their work enhances the credibility and recognition of participating organisations in ways that have supported their development of new partnerships: "*new partners are prepared to listen to what we are saying because [it] has been already said and decoded through your research*" **[F]**.

The tools, opportunities, and vocabulary provided by the research were used by Athayde to set up a new organisation, Favela Holding: "*When I started Favela Holding in 2015... I used the same tools for summoning new partners… with Globo Network…with UNESCO, with the Brazilian state at the table*" **[F]**. Favela Holding pulled together 25 companies to support the development of favelas and their residents; its operations now employ some 2,000 people, many of them favela-dwellers. In 2017, Istoé Magazine (a Brazilian weekly news magazine roughly equivalent to *Time Magazine*) awarded Mr Athayde its Social Entrepreneur Award for his work on Favela Holdings.

Enhancing awareness, understanding and wellbeing among favela inhabitants. Favela residents who participated in the research reported significantly improved understanding and a more positive image of themselves and their neighbourhoods. In a devolution workshop with activists and favela-dwellers, 98% of participants considered that the work had been useful to them; 91% expected to be able to use the knowledge gained from the research; and 91% reported a better understanding of their communities and themselves **[G]**.

Interviews conducted over the summer of 2019 with some of those who participated in the work suggested that this sense of enhanced understanding and wellbeing had persisted. One favela-dweller, activist and member of staff at CUFA, reported that the research: "*has helped us to see ourselves, to know the power we have, the mission we have…[it] made us grow, it gave us strength to continue without fear*" **[H]**. According to Athayde, this enhanced understanding has helped favela inhabitants demand more from those who should support them, "*so that both business and government understand that they cannot just give us the minimum*" **[F]**. A member of the Education Team at AfroReggae agrees: "*everyone in the favela knows about the book and the toolkit, and they say: 'this is so cool, now we are in a book!' Then people feel empowered, encouraged, stronger*" **[I]**.

These contributions to increased capacity and enhanced self-esteem among research participants make an important wider contribution to the inclusivity, resilience, safety, and sustainability of the communities in which they live and work.

5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)

[A] Download data from LSE and UNESCO media and web communications divisions.

[B] Transcribed and translated from interview (28 June 2019) with Director and Representative of UNESCO in Brazil (Brasilia Office). In Portuguese.

[C] Unsolicited letter from Assistant Director-General for the Social and Human Sciences of UNESCO, received 23 December 2014.

[D] Transcribed and translated from interview (29 September 2019) with Secretary of State for Social Development and Fight Against Hunger, 2011-2016. (Quotation used subsequently approved by Secretary of State.)

[E] Unsolicited letter from Director-General of UNESCO, received 14 November 2017.

[F] Transcribed and translated from interview (27 June 2019) with CEO of CUFA and Favela Holding. In Portuguese.

[G] Data from evaluation of devolving research findings workshops with favela residents, Rio de Janeiro, May 2014. Excel data files also available upon request.

[H] Transcribed and translated from interview (27 June 2019) with favela-dweller, leading activist, and member of staff at CUFA. In Portuguese.

[I] Transcribed and translated from interview (26 June 2019) with member of AfroReggae Education Team. In Portuguese.