11° P&D DESIGN
Congresso Brasileiro de
Pesquisa e Desenvolvimento
em Design
2014

Gramado – RS

De 29 de setembro a 2 de outubro de 2014

SERVICE DESIGN AND FAVELAS IN RIO DE JANEIRO

Carla Cipolla

Federal University of Rio de Janeiro, COPPE

cipolla@pep.ufrj.br

Maíra Prestes Joly

Federal University of Rio de Janeiro, COPPE

magprestes@pep.ufrj.br

Fernanda Benevides Zanela

Federal University of Rio de Janeiro, COPPE

fzanela@pep.ufrj.br

Resumo: Este artigo apresenta o cluster temático da rede DESIS, Informal, Formal e Colaborativo (IFC), uma iniciativa promovida por um grupo de laboratórios DESIS, cujo objetivo é identificar ideias potenciais para uma nova geração de serviços que poderiam ser projetados a partir da perspectiva de comunidades carentes. Dentro deste contexto, o artigo demonstra os resultados preliminares deste estudo do DESIS UFRJ, grupo de pesquisa localizado na COPPE - Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro. Para tanto, o artigo desenvolve uma revisão da literatura de termos como design de serviços, serviços colaborativos e relacionais e comunidades carentes, assim como prepara estudos de casos de serviços que nasceram de iniciativas de inovação social dentro de favelas do Rio de Janeiro. Como resultados, são identificados casos de inovação social dentro de favelas do Rio de Janeiro e descritas as características e potencialidades de suas iniciativas. Por fim, este artigo discute inovações sociais nascidas dentro de favelas como inspiração para o projeto de modelos inovadores de serviços, capazes de desenvolver novas oportunidades para essas comunidades.

Palavras-chaves: inovação social, serviços relacionais, favelas.

Abstract: *This articles presents the DESIS network thematic cluster Informal, Formal and Collaborative (IFC), an initiative promoted by a group*

of DESIS Labs, whose purpose is to identify ideas for a new generation of services that are designed from the perspective of Underserved Communities. Within this context the article demonstrates the DESIS UFRJ preliminary results of this study, a research group located at COPPE-Federal University of Rio de Janeiro. For that, the article develops a literature review of terms as service design, relational e collaborative service and Underserved Communities, and prepares study cases of services that were born from social innovation initiatives within favelas of Rio de Janeiro. As a result, it is identified social innovation cases within favelas of Rio de Janeiro and described their features and socio-cultural qualities. Finally, the article discusses social innovations born inside favelas as inspirations to design innovative service models able to foster new opportunities for these communities.

keywords: *social innovation, relational services, favelas*

1. INTRODUCTION

Informal, formal and collaborative (IFC) is the name of the thematic cluster from DESIS network (*Design for Social Innovation and Sustainability*), an initiative promoted by a group of DESIS Labs that have found a theme of common interest, and agreed to align and systemize their programmed activities related to design for social innovation within Underserved Communities.

The purpose of the IFC cluster is to identify potential ideas for a new generation of services that could be designed from the Underserved Communities' perspective. One of the members and also one of the leaders of this thematic cluster is the UFRJ DESIS group, located at COPPE- Federal University of Rio de Janeiro. This research group is investigating service models within favelas of Rio de Janeiro that were born from social innovation initiatives. The hypothesis is that services born from social innovations within these communities are collaborative (MANZINI, 2009) and relational (CIPOLLA & MANZINI, 2009). Because of that, they present mechanisms and operating models that are innovative, since they are able to increase the social capital and promote development within favelas. The idea is to investigate these social innovation initiatives as inspirations to design innovative service models able to foster new opportunities for local development and new forms of interactions between people and institutions from inside and outside the favela. Therefore, the project aims to investigate the emergence of collaborative services (MANZINI, 2009) within favelas in Rio de Janeiro, specifically:

- Identifying social innovation cases within favelas of Rio de Janeiro and describing their features and socio-cultural qualities;

- Developing service design activities, based on selected social innovations;

- Reflecting in depth on the nature and qualities of collaborative services, based on the analysis of the identified cases of social innovation, together with the analysis of the service design activities developed;

- Collaborating with DESIS groups from Botswana, Kenya and South Africa, and other ones, in order to exchange knowledge about the different social innovations identified within their Underserved Communities and the emerging services models identified;

- Developing specific knowledge and specific design tools for the context considered.

This article demonstrates preliminary results of this research and suggests an emergent focus of attention for service design and design for social innovation: working with Underserved Communities.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

To support this paper, we considered the theoretical framework as follows.

2.1 Underserved Community definition

Underserved Communities are complex social ecosystems, often characterized by marginalization and frustration with a system that fails to meet local needs, lack of basic services, barriers to participation in policy making processes and the density of their social networks. Traditional ties (those of family, village and neighborhood can be the source in fact of positive strength, important local knowledge, and a powerful social cohesion.

These communities are usually – but not exclusively – placed in *informal settlements,* which are defined as urban areas that function outside, or at the limits of, the regulations that govern society in cities and their surrounding territories. Brazilian favelas, South African townships, North African shantytowns, Indian slums or the problematic neighborhoods of cities in the world's North: altogether a billion people are estimated to live in such places today. The categorical term 'slum' can disguise the significant variations in cultural, socio-political and economic contexts that characterize these growing communities worldwide, which are projected to double in in the next fifteen years.

Looking more closely at this complex reality, it is apparent that the existing social and human capital that exists within Underserved Communities, could be used to solve specific, concrete problems of everyday life faced by this population, in a more open, flexible and transparent manner.

According to Prestes Joly et al. (2014), in the case of favelas in Rio de Janeiro, those communities are commonly represented as something homogeneous, identifying this popular space by the "strong socio-spatial stigmatization, specially inferred by the residents of the other parts of the city." (Silva, 2009, p. 22-23). The favela is "a space deprived of urban infrastructure – water, electricity, sewage, garbage collection". (SILVA, 2009, p. 16). For IBGE, the Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatistica, "a favela is a settlement of 50 housing units or more located on public or private property and characterized by disordered occupation without the benefits of essential public services." (DYMSKI, 2011, p. 10).

Since 2008, the creation of the Pacifying Police Units (Unidades de Polícia Pacificadora - UPP), a project from the government of Rio de Janeiro, has being

contributing for the states' increasing participation within some of these communities, especially against the drug and gun traffic, what has been resulting in improvements for their infrastructure. However, even with these improvements, people within favelas search for new alternatives to better their daily conditions of life.

In fact, it is observed that it is precisely the stigma of absence within these communities that makes people to come together to work collaboratively, aiming for common social and economic benefits. Under the design's perspective, a study about social innovations that emerge from favelas is interesting, since designers could search for potentialities to be developed within these communities.

2.2 Creative communities and social innovations within favelas

Favelas in Rio de Janeiro are commonly referred to as communities ('comunidades'). Different social networks form these popular spaces which facilitates the relations among their actors, in the search for individual and common benefits. Larissa Lomnitz (2009), a Latin-American thinker who researches about the central role of social networks within urban studies, claims that organizations that arise from informal communities use traditional institutions to survive. These institutions are "family, friendship, membership of an ethnic group or system of beliefs", that base themselves on their "cultural definition of trust and loyalty, which are central elements to the work of informal networks". (LOMNITZ, 2009, p. 19). To this author, "a social network is a field of relations among individuals", that establishes "complex relations within a specific social space." (LOMNITZ, 2009, p. 19). These relationships enable solidarity networks to be formed, what permits the creation of systems to exchange information goods and services.

These new arrangements of social actors generate opportunities for the emergence of social innovations. Designers that want to identify social innovations in these communities must understand the way their local actors organize themselves, in order to find alternative tactics to design activities that promote income generation, proper waste disposal, education and care activities for children, and so forth. The focus would be the generation of shareable benefits, according to the local reality. The fact of favelas being places with reduced access to basic services fosters the emergence of social innovations, characterized by being based on strong relationships of trust and reputation among individuals within their social networks.

2.3 Service design - relational and collaborative services

The area of service design arises because of the increasing importance of the service sector to the world economy. Manzini (2009) states that "in recent decades the focus has progressively moved towards services, while products have been increasingly seen as 'service evidences', i.e. physical elements that make services possible". (MANZINI, 2009, p. 47).

This movement towards an economy of services reflects in new research in areas such as marketing, management, engineering, computing and behavioral science (MERONI & SANGIORGI, 2011). Consequently, the research and practice in design also searches for new directions, from the production of tangible products, to the

development of product-service systems (MANZINI & VEZZOLI, 2002), capable to provide systemic solutions not only to the people, but also to the economy and environment in which they are. Now, when talking about design for social innovation (MANZINI, 2008), it is possible to describe the collaborative services that may arise from these types of initiatives, since to happen they "ask for the direct and active involvement of all the interested actors, final users included". (MANZINI, 2009, p. 50). The term "collaborative" emerged from the fact that the qualities of their interpersonal interactions were far removed from those of a *delivery* approach to services in which participants, from frontline employees (representing the organization) to clients/users, have predefined roles (i.e., employees are active, clients are passive). However, not only do the social innovations identified deconstruct the *delivery* approach to services, creating new collaborations and transforming all participants into active co-producers of commonly recognized benefits, but they also give rise to a special form of interpersonal interaction in services known as *relational services* (CIPOLLA & MANZINI, 2009), where participants need not only to be operationally active and collaborative, but also well-inclined and willing to relate with others in a personal manner.

This research activity is based on a conceptual framework that was developed in previous research in which the notions of collaborative services, and experiential vs. relational interactions were developed.

The first came to light when research activities on design for social innovation identified in social innovation cases, modalities of service interactions that have been called collaborative services (MANZINI, 2008b). The term "collaborative" emerged from the fact that the qualities of their interpersonal interactions were far removed from those of a delivery approach to services in which participants, from frontline employees (representing the organization) to clients/users, have predefined roles (i.e., employees are active, clients are passive). However, not only do the social innovations identified deconstruct the delivery approach to services, creating new collaborations and transforming all participants into active co-producers of commonly recognized benefits, but they also give rise to a special form of interpersonal interaction in services known as relational services (CIPOLLA & MANZINI, 2009), where participants need not only to be operationally active and collaborative, but also well-inclined and willing to relate with others in a personal manner.

Based on a Buberian (CIPOLLA, 2007) theoretical framework, these finds led to the definition of experiential vs. relational services as polarities by which to identify the interpersonal qualities of services. Those relating to clearly designed roles and procedures for service actors, which predefine the range of possibilities for interpersonal encounters, are experiential, and those which increase the possibilities for (or even favor) unexpected interpersonal encounters, whether intentionally or otherwise, are relational.

On this basis, this paper assumes working hypotheses that are specific to the authors' research:

- Collaborative services in favelas. Given that informal settlements are underserved:

- The best services to be developed there are collaborative ones, i.e. services in which the all the people involved actively participate in achieving the final result.
- Collaboration can be both "vertical" between service provider and service users/ co-producers, and "horizontal" between service users/ co-producers themselves.

This opens a promising field of action for service design, which can collect new ideas for innovative solutions, implementing them with its tools and methods.

3. CASES

This part presents cases of collaborative services born from social innovation initiatives found in the favelas of the city of Rio de Janeiro by the UFRJ DESIS group.

3.1 Fight for Peace

Context

The project was initiated by Luke Dowdney, an English researcher who completed his Master's degree in Social Anthropology at Edinburgh University in 1995, writing his dissertation on the violence suffered by street children in Brazil, specifically in Recife. During his research, Luke lived with young people in situations of high risk and had his mind opened to questions of human rights and violence. By 2000, he lauched *Luta pela Paz* (Fight for Peace) as a project of Viva Rio (NGO), with the aim of providing an alternative to the armed violence and drug trafficking that often formed part of life for the young residents of Complexo da Maré, a complex of 17 favelas in Rio de Janeiro. Luke's love for boxing – he was a former amateur boxer and British Universities champion in 1995 – led him to see in the sport a possibility of attracting and working with these young people from Complexo da Maré in a holistic project combining boxing & martial arts with personal development. In 2007 Fight for Peace became independent from Viva Rio, establishing itself as a non-governmental organization (NGO) in Brazil (Associação Luta pela Paz). In the same year, Fight for Peace also replicated its methodology with the opening of the Fight for Peace

Academy in London.

Collaborative value

Fight for Peace believes that boxing and martial arts offer a broad appeal and important values to young people: discipline, respect, self-control, identity, a feeling of belonging and pride. In this way, boxing is a tool to open a dialogue with young people who were not interested in school. From this initiative, youngsters start to feel more confidents to discuss their issues and to be reintegrated to school and social projects in their communities. This is also a way to make people to be related with communitarian activities, instead of being involved with drug dealing and traffic.

Operating service model

Fight for Peace has experienced four stages. (a) Instinctive Reaction: boxing materialized as a tool to open a dialogue with young people who were not interested in school or in social projects. These were often young people involved in the trafficking of drugs; **(**b) Consolidation: combining an attempt to understand the needs of young people through research in the field (Luke wrote two case studies: Children of the Drug Trade and Neither War nor Peace) and the involvement of a multidiscipline team, Fight for Peace created a holistic and integrated methodology; (c) Growth: replication of Fight for Peace's work, demonstrating that the model can work in other areas/cultures, and international training, what permits growth on a global scale of the support offered to children and youths; (d) Sustainability: developing the structure of the FFP Group to guarantee the local and international sustainability of the project, and the launch of LUTA Clothing, a social enterprise generating new funds for the group.

3.2 "Da Roça": Direct purchase of natural and organic products from farmers in the favela

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Context

Two residents born in the favela and a German who went to live there started up the initiative. The whole group had a desire to start a local food supply. Their central idea was to promote better quality of life and consciousness of the food production processes. Da Roça is a store inside the favela Complexo da Maré that sells natural products for local residents. The products are directly bought from agriculture producers next to the city of Rio de Janeiro and resold for locals for lower prices than regular markets.

Collaborative value

The initiative was born from the collaborative work of a group of local residents. Because of their local connections, they could mobilize people to start eating in a more natural and organic way. In addition, they could establish new relations, between favela's residents and farmers.

Operating service model

The model of this service consists in eliminating the intermediate of a regular process of buying. The organic products come from producers who employ agroecological, organic procedures, or are organized in cooperatives. Residents can buy from the store by the Internet, phone or personally. Moreover, it is possible that groups of buyers get together to make orders. One of the differences from a regular process of buying from a market is that, in this case, the buying is made according to the agricultures' production, which varies according to the season.

3.3 Favela experience: home hosting service in favelas

Context

Favela experience is a service of hosting tourists in the favelas of Rio de Janeiro. The service consists in renting bedrooms of people's houses inside the favelas and providing touristic tours. Elliot Rosemberg, who was studying management in the University of Virginia, idealized the initiative. Elliot was funded with a scholarship to develop his project *in loco*. After that, he participated of many start-ups competitions that awarded him with some money to make the initial investment.

Collaborative value

It is an immersive experience in the slum through engaging in personal relations tourists and local residents. The initiative aims, through tourism in favelas' areas, to break the stigma about the slums and their habitants, bringing people from different backgrounds to have a cultural interexchange (between Brazilians-Brazilians or Brazilians-foreigners) and generate income for the residents. This case works mostly based on interpersonal relations, creating a relation of trust between promoters, hosts and tourist, who understand that all can profit if work together.

Operating service model

It is a service for tourist hosting and guiding in the favelas of Rio de Janeiro. The initiative aims to establish a network for hosting tourists in the slums of Rio de Janeiro. This service includes: providing support for local people to promote their bedrooms in websites as Airbnb; management of the online platforms; reception of tourists in the favelas, and linking these tourists with local guides. This kind of initiative has creating jobs and income in favelas of Rio.

4. SUGGESTING NEW MODELS OF SERVICES FROM THE SOCIAL INNOVATION CASES

After analyzing the cases afore mentioned, it is possible to recognize new ways to provide services, that are based in values not always acknowledged in main stream services. Some of the following ideas are identified:

- The use of sport practices to open a dialogue with youngsters that are faced with situations of drug dealing and violence;

- The elimination of the intermediate of a regular process of buying;

- Creation of new relations between local community and food suppliers;

- Engaging in personal relations tourists and favelas' local residents;

- Creating new tourists services inside favelas;

- New social relations among actors within a community and between the community and external actors, based on confidence, loyalty and reputation;

- Transmission of knowledge.

These collected ideas are clues to imagine a new set of services models. The services that could be developed from these seeds are rooted in a local context and based on social relationships within a community, which means that they are better adapted to people's reality and likely to create better conditions of life. Thus, designers could identify potentially promising activities within favelas, with a focus on value and particular characteristics of these communities. These actions could be directed even to people outside the reality of the favelas and promote income generation.

5. CONCLUSIONS

The analysis of these cases brings new perspectives for a service designer, because it allows solutions models to be identified and to be extracted, which could be replicated in other contexts. These cases behave as inspirations and sources of knowledge through observation. They identify an unexplored potential in a specific context and new solutions models that can be replicated.

The unfavorable economic situation found within the favelas is a driving incentive for the generation of social innovation. People recognize their needs and design services with available resources. Those created services are based on social relations and trust bonds, what indicates new paths to suggest new models of services. Because of these characteristics, to implement these models in contexts outside the favelas, it

may be necessary to develop strategies and campaigns that encourage the creation of systems based on personal relationships instead of being only based on monetary exchanges.

Above all, the favelas and low-income communities are neighborhoods, where people live and structure their lives and personal relationships. Designers and researchers must keep this in mind, working with ethics and reserving all due respect to people, their social relations, culture and the way that environment operates.

As in any environment, in the favelas there are also cases of social innovation that are not noble, but in the service of crime. Designers should not look away from these initiatives, since they can extract from them their solution models, in order to apply them with other purposes.

For continuing activities, this research aims to develop service design activities within favelas of Rio de Janeiro, based on selected social innovations, as well as reflecting in depth on the nature and qualities of collaborative services born inside them. Finally, this research aims to frame specific knowledge and specific design tools from the context of favelas, to open a new field of possibilities for designers based in initiatives in these Underserved Communities. The idea here is to promote a collaborative process through dialogue between communities with very different socioeconomic realities.

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