


Article

 10.1590/1809-58442025112en Open access

## FROM THE BORROWED ADDRESS TO THE UNBIASED ZIP CODE: the circulation of objects and consumption in the slum - Paraisópolis (SP)

*Do endereço emprestado ao (des)preconceito do CEP: sobre a circulação de mercadorias e o consumo na favela – Paraisópolis (SP)*

*De la dirección prestada hasta el (des)prejuicio del código postal: la circulación de objetos y el consumo en el barrio bajo - Paraisópolis (SP)*

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### Editorial Details

Double-blind system

### Article History:

Received: 12/23/2024

Accepted: 05/09/2025

Available online: 07/30/2025

Artigo ID: e2025112en

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### Editing and XML Markup:

IR Publicações

### Funding:

CNPq

### How to cite:

NOGUEIRA, Maria Alice de F. From the borrowed address to the unbiased zip code: the circulation of objects and consumption in the slum - Paraisópolis (SP). São Paulo: INTERCOM - Brazilian Journal of Communication Sciences, v. 48, e2025112. <https://doi.org/10.1590/1809-58442025112en>

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### ABSTRACT:

The starting point for this article is the creation of entrepreneurial initiatives carried out in Paraisópolis due to local experiences in the battle against COVID-19. It focuses its analysis specifically on the enterprise Favela Brasil Xpress (FBX). The FBX, a last mile distribution logistic hub served as a basis for the study of how consumption and the circulation of objects managed to put the favela on the map". It took into consideration two specific actions carried out by FBX: the unblocking of Paraisópolis postcodes in the delivery systems of large retail chains; and the design and implementation of Plus-Code project in Paraisópolis alongside with Google. Methodologically, an ethnographic investigation was developed, with two visits to Paraisópolis (May/2022 – June/2023), in which in-depth interviews were carried out with local residents.

**Key-words:** Paraisópolis, Consumption, Material Culture, Biased Code

### RESUMO

Este artigo tem como ponto de partida a criação de iniciativas de empreendedorismo desenvolvidas em Paraisópolis resultantes da experiência do combate à Covid-19 localmente, com interesse específico na empresa Favela Brasil Xpress (FBX). Hub de logística *last mile*, a FBX serviu como base para um estudo sobre como o consumo e a circulação de objetos colocaram "a favela no mapa" - simbólico e social -, após duas ações específicas desenvolvidas pela empresa: o desbloqueio dos CEPs de Paraisópolis nos sistemas de entrega de grandes varejistas; e a implementação do projeto *Plus-Code* na comunidade em conjunto com a *Google*. Metodologicamente, foi desenvolvida uma pesquisa etnográfica, com duas visitas à Paraisópolis (maio/2022 – junho/2023), nas quais foram feitas entrevistas em profundidade com moradores locais.

**Palavras-chave:** Paraisópolis, Consumo, Cultura Material, Preconceito do CEP

### RESUMEN

El punto de partida de este artículo es la creación de iniciativas empresariales realizadas en Paraisópolis a partir de experiencias locales en la lucha contra el COVID-19. Centra su análisis específicamente en la empresa Favela Brasil Xpress (FBX). La FBX, un centro logístico de distribución de última milla, sirvió de base para estudiar cómo el consumo y la circulación de objetos lograron poner "la favela en el mapa". Se consideraron dos acciones específicas realizadas por FBX: el desbloqueo de los códigos postales de Paraisópolis en los sistemas de entrega de las grandes cadenas minoristas, y el diseño e implementación del proyecto Plus-Code junto con Google. Metodológicamente se desarrolló una investigación etnográfica, con dos visitas a Paraisópolis (mayo/2022 – junio/2023), en las que se realizaron entrevistas en profundidad a pobladores locales.

**Palabras-clave:** Paraisópolis, Consumo, Cultura material, Prejuicio del código postal

## CRediT

- Conflicts of Interest: The author certify that they have no commercial or associative interests that represent a conflict of interest regarding the manuscript.
- Authors Contributions: Conceptualization; Data curation; Formal analysis; Investigation; Methodology; Project administration; Software; Supervision; Validation; Visualization; Writing - original draft; review and editing.

*Article submitted for similarity verification*

### **Data Availability:**

The author state that all data used in the research has been made available within the body of the article.

INTERCOM Journal encourages data sharing but, in adherence to ethical guidelines, does not require the disclosure of any means of identifying research subjects, thereby preserving their privacy. The practice of open data aims to enable the reproducibility of results and ensure unrestricted transparency in published research findings without requiring the disclosure of the subjects' identities.

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## Introduction

In 2020, during the Covid-19 pandemic in Brazil, the Paraisópolis favela gained global media attention for successfully creating, developing, and implementing an Alternative and Community Plan (PAC) to combat Covid-19. The results showed lower average rates of coronavirus infection and deaths than those in São Paulo, the city where the favela is located (NOGUEIRA & BORGES, 2023).

The Paraisópolis PAC operated in three areas - “Health,” “Social,” and “Economy” - grounded on the reorganization of mobility practices and regimes (GLICK SCHILLER & SALAZAR 2013; SHELLER, 2018; FREIRE-MEDEIROS & LAGES, 2020; MANO, 2021) of people, objects, and information already operating in the favela before the pandemic. Organized by the Union of Residents and Traders of Paraisópolis (UMCP) and led by Gilson Rodrigues, a local community leader and president of G10 Favelas<sup>1</sup>, the PAC team included over 600 volunteers known as Street Presidents (PR) from April to September 2020.

Although not the primary focus of this article, it is worth noting that PRs were responsible for monitoring the movement of residents within the favela and addressing the health needs of families within their coverage areas. In earlier works, Nogueira and Borges (2023) analyzed the organization of PR activities, defining them as “socio-spatial infrastructures of interaction” (FREIRE-MEDEIROS & LAGES, 2020) that centralized not only local actions to combat the virus but also efforts to mitigate hunger and unemployment among residents.

As the pandemic spread globally and the return to a “new normal” was delayed, the Paraisópolis PAC shifted its focus to social efforts, developing a system for distributing food baskets and providing daily meals to residents facing food insecurity. Organized by Elizandra Cerqueira, founder of “Mãos de Maria Brasil”—a social impact business implemented in Paraisópolis in 2007—1.467 million meals, equivalent to 700 tons of food, were distributed between March 23 and December 31, 2020. At the pandemic’s peak, up to 10,000 meals were distributed daily<sup>2</sup>.

Parallel to social actions, G10 Favelas leadership in Paraisópolis began developing economic initiatives, redirecting efforts toward pre-existing projects like social entrepreneurship. According to Rodrigues, the fundamental aim of these actions was to position favelas as powerful economies rather than as marginalized or charity-dependent entities. As detailed in the next section, the creation of G10 Bank—the “first digital bank of favelas” (G10 BANK..., n.d.) in 2021—played an essential role in providing credit, enabling local commerce to survive the pandemic while developing new businesses focused on emerging demands and opportunities.

Using Paraisópolis as the primary locus of analysis and a timeframe from 2021 to 2023, this research examines the creation of the Favela Brasil Xpress (FBX) startup as a starting point to investigate consumption practices within the favela. This period was marked by (im)mobilities due to pandemic-related isolation, which partially halted the acquisition of goods and the movement of people.

Founded and launched in 2021 by Givanildo Pereira Bastos, a.k.a. Giva—a Paraisópolis resident and National Coordinator of the Street Presidents (PRs)—FBX introduced a last-mile delivery system for e-commerce goods. FBX initiated a shift in consumption dynamics by unblocking Paraisópolis’s postal codes on major e-commerce platforms and partnering with Google to implement the Plus-Code project.

These two initiatives are analyzed in this article as crucial to understanding Paraisópolis’s entry into: 1) consumption maps, becoming a target audience for national retailers; 2) Google Maps, integrating the global tech giant’s digital cartography via the Plus-Code project; 3) social initiatives, as unblocking postal codes dismantled stigmas, allowing residents to participate in government programs and employment applications requiring proof of residence; and 4) symbolic representations, with the favela and its leaders gaining international media attention through interviews and invitations to speak at events in the U.S., Europe, and Latin America.

Methodologically, this research employed an exploratory, qualitative, and unstructured approach (MALHOTRA, 2006), including field visits in May 2022 and June 2023, which provided insights into the studied context. In-depth interviews were conducted with FBX’s founder and local residents/consumers who used FBX’s services during the research period. Additionally, a bibliographic review of key works in Social Communication, Consumption Studies, Sociology of Mobilities, Geography, and Material Culture provided a framework for analyzing the cultural and socio-economic context in which mobility and immobility shaped the lives of favela residents and their material practices, as detailed in subsequent sections of this article.

<sup>1</sup> Group that brings together community leaders from the 10 largest favelas in Brazil. Available at: <https://www.g10favelas.org/>. Accessed on: 07/10/2023.

<sup>2</sup> Interview given to the author on 02/09/2020.

## Mobility Regimes and ZIP Code Prejudice: The Story of FBX

A resident of Paraisópolis, Giva was already working at UCMP when the pandemic brought the world to a standstill. As part of the team created by Gilson Rodrigues, Giva began organizing a group of volunteers to act as Street Presidents (PRs). During the first six months of the pandemic—from March to September 2020—the group grew to 652 volunteers, each responsible for 50 families, supporting a total of 32,600 families. This meant that 80% of Paraisópolis’ population received assistance from the PRs. Due to the success of the initiative, Giva was promoted to National Coordinator of the Street Presidents, tasked with expanding the community action plan to combat COVID-19, unemployment, and hunger to 181 other vulnerable areas. These efforts brought the expertise of the Paraisópolis team to other communities in São Paulo and to favelas in states across Brazil’s North, Northeast, and Southeast regions (NOGUEIRA & BORGES, 2023).

As the coordinator of PRs in Paraisópolis, Giva also led a team responsible for receiving donations from private companies, such as medical supplies, non-perishable food items, and other goods. In an interview with the author, Giva mentioned how the team often faced obstacles in receiving donations. From Avenida Hebe Camargo, which borders the eastern side of Paraisópolis and separates it from the affluent Morumbi neighborhood, everything within the favela was categorized as a “risk area” by logistics companies.

The issue of violence in and around favelas is highly complex and beyond the scope of this article. However, it is important to highlight that historically, favelas have been viewed as “a kind of tumor threatening the social organization of the city” (MACHADO DA SILVA & MENEZES, 2019). In their study of Rio de Janeiro’s favelas, Machado da Silva and Menezes (2019) note that, especially since the 1980s, the expansion of drug trafficking in these communities has led to increased armed confrontations between criminal factions and the police. This situation positioned urban violence as a social problem rooted in the favelas but extending across cities, fueling the media’s framing of a “war” on drugs.

The blame for this so-called war was placed on favela residents, who became criminalized and stereotyped as the “Other” who must be excluded at all costs. As a result, the call for “tough” measures shifted from targeting specific social groups to enforcing territorial segregation of urban areas deemed dangerous (MACHADO DA SILVA & MENEZES, 2019, p.531).

Territorial segregation, or “life under siege” (MACHADO DA SILVA & LEITE, 2008), creates a socio-spatial and political condition of confinement that perpetuates the favela as a permanent risk area. Over the years, the stark division between affluent and impoverished urban areas has resulted in chronic neglect of peripheral populations in public policy and a range of social and symbolic prejudices. These include the “ZIP code prejudice” examined in this article. Giva explains:

“In Brazil, someone without a ZIP code or official address cannot receive deliveries, open a bank account, enroll their children in school, sign up for social programs like ‘Leve Leite,’ or provide an address on job applications. This is ZIP code prejudice.” (GIVA, 2022)<sup>3</sup>

At this point, we draw attention to the concept of “mobility regimes” (GLICK SCHILLER & SALAZAR, 2013), which are critical to understanding ZIP code prejudice. According to Sheller (2018), mobility regimes are made up of multiple normative practices that determine who can move, when, where, under what conditions, and with what significance.

Mobility regimes [involve] economic measures, political interventions, managerial decisions, discourses ranging from science to marketing, normative statements, and control mechanisms that collectively frame and define movement practices, while shaping subjective meanings of mobility.” (FREIRE-MEDEIROS & LAGES, 2020)

In the case of Paraisópolis, data on risk areas show how public and private institutions, including major retailers, have established mobility regimes over the years that restrict, complicate, or prohibit the circulation of goods in favelas. For example, when a logistics company’s GPS identifies entry into a high-risk area like Paraisópolis, delivery truck doors automatically lock. These practices reinforce structural socio-territorial prejudice, turning places of residence into markers of inequality—not only in terms of personal mobility but, as in this case, in the movement of goods.

<sup>3</sup> Interview given to the author on 17/06/2022.

Exploring the infrastructural and discursive scope of these mobility regulation systems - whether involving people, goods, images, policies, capital, or information - reveals the inequalities present in daily movements, influenced by markers such as race, gender, and nationality (MANO, 2021).

Even before the pandemic, the delivery of purchased goods to addresses outside the community was a common practice among favela residents. This workaround was not a significant barrier to consumption, given the freedom of movement before COVID-19. Goods would be sent to borrowed addresses, such as those of friends or family in other neighborhoods, workplaces, or nearby businesses like a pet shop used as a drop-off point, as mentioned by a Paraisópolis resident. However, during the pandemic, with lockdown measures and the ZIP code prejudice, this workaround became unfeasible.

According to Brazil's Ministry of Development, Industry, Commerce, and Services (MDIC), e-commerce surged during the pandemic, generating approximately R\$450 billion between 2019 and 2022—more than double the combined total of R\$178.06 billion from 2016 to 2019 (CASTRO, 2023)<sup>4</sup>. This is where the story of Favela Brasil Xpress (FBX) begins.

With improving COVID-19 indicators and declining mortality rates following mass vaccination efforts, Paraisópolis shifted its community action plan in 2021 to address emerging social and economic demands. As mentioned in this article's introduction, the community action plan evolved to include social and economic initiatives, emphasizing the creation of social entrepreneurship activities.

As previously mentioned in the introduction to this article, the community-based alternative plan to combat COVID-19 in Paraisópolis transitioned its focus over time, becoming more oriented toward social and economic initiatives. This shift opened up two new fronts of community work. Commercial activities with social impact began to take shape, encouraged by the implementation of social entrepreneurship initiatives. According to Melo Neto and Froes (2001), social entrepreneurship is defined as a "social business, which focuses on civil society as its main area of operation and relies on partnerships involving the community, government, and the private sector as its strategy." In Paraisópolis, social entrepreneurship initiatives are not new, having grown since the 2000s (BORGES, 2012). However, during the pandemic, the leadership of G10 Favelas concentrated its efforts on significantly developing the local economy, supported by financial investments through the business accelerator and collective bank, G10 Bank.

The G10 Bank is a fintech that forms part of the G10 Hub – Business Accelerator for Favela Development, with the mission of fostering local commerce. “[...] The fintech was inspired to create, within a financial environment, an institution that promotes social and financial inclusion and provides income growth opportunities for entrepreneurs [...] while also stimulating job creation in the communities where it operates alongside G10 Favelas” (WHO WE ARE..., n.d.).

Drawing on his experience as a Street President and with financial support from G10 Bank, Giva founded FBX, a last-mile logistics company dedicated to delivering goods within the Paraisópolis favela. The company's mission is to provide residents with a complete consumer experience while employing locals who have intimate knowledge of the territory. This expertise is twofold: familiarity with the favela's unique geography, including its intricate network of streets and alleys, and the ability to manage deliveries via mobile apps.

To facilitate the distribution of goods, FBX's first step was to establish a partnership with the Americanas SA marketplace, convincing the retailer to unlock Paraisópolis' ZIP codes deemed as “high-risk areas” in their purchasing system. Following this initial success, other marketplaces, such as Total Express, Magalu, Gollog, Amazon, and others, approached FBX to implement delivery systems in Paraisópolis and become last-mile logistics partners. By taking action to unlock ZIP codes—a measure described by Giva as combating the “ZIP code bias”—this research highlights how consumption and the circulation of goods define the community as a space for mobility and the flow of people, consumer goods, and capital, transcending the usual narratives of violence, crime, drugs, and militias that often define perceptions of favelas.

As Giva noted in an interview with the author in May 2022, beyond consumption practices, the issue of unlocking ZIP codes touches on broader social and official existence questions. In the favelas of Brazil's major cities, many streets are not legally recognized, leaving residents disconnected from services available only to those with verifiable addresses.

<sup>4</sup> Available at <https://g1.globo.com/economia/noticia/2023/05/11/com-pandemia-comercio-eletronico-cresce-e-movimenta-r-450-bilhoes-em-tres-anos-no-pais.ghtml>. Accessed on: 10/21/2023.

People living in these areas are forced to obtain fake proof of address or rely on local micro-powers to access their rights. [...] The lack of recognition of their place of residence as part of the city amounts to being excluded from exercising citizenship: not having a ZIP code or living in a discriminated ZIP code means not being recognized as a citizen (SANCHES, 2020).

As highlighted by Giva (2022), many registration systems for banks, HR departments, government social programs, and public schools are based on ZIP codes as managed and widely disseminated by the Brazilian postal service (Correios). Once a ZIP code is blocked in these systems, validating a place of residence shifts from a postal code to physical proof of residency provided by the local Residents' Association. These micro-power arrangements, as mentioned by Sanches (2020), serve as a certificate of community residency. Thus, the Residents' Association assumes a central role in validating residency and organizing community life.

As we will see, the complexity of delivery logistics in favelas adds another layer to this issue. According to testimonies given by local residents to the author, most goods purchased online were delivered to "borrowed addresses," such as the homes of friends or relatives in other neighborhoods, workplaces, or nearby establishments like the "pet store" mentioned by one interviewee.

### Unlocking the ZIP Code and Plus-Code: When Object Circulation Puts the Favela on the Map

"For me, it was magical because we, as women, are still consumers. It was magical because we would buy—oh, I can't see anything because I want to buy it—this Shopee thing, my goodness! So, it made everything much, much, much, much, much easier. And, besides the products, they also now have these mappings, right?" (Interviewee 1, 2023)

When considering studies and theories related to the act of consumption—defined here as the search, acquisition, use, and disposal of goods (BAUDRILLARD, 1970)—in contemporary times, the motivations for acquiring something go beyond its use value as an object, addressing symbolic and subjective dimensions highlighted by advertising communication activities (NOGUEIRA, 2021). In the testimony given by Interviewee 1 (E1) to the author in June 2023 and quoted above, the affirmation of consumption as an activity transcending "practical reason" (SAHLINS, 2003) is very clear: not only through the "magical moment" of receiving the product at home—in this case, a 43-inch TV, a long-desired item—but also through the seven times E1 emphasized the word "much," strongly reinforcing the convenience offered by FBX's logistics system.

E1, a resident of Paraisópolis, explained what online shopping was like before. Living on an alley without a postal code, no deliveries reached her home. Unable to receive even the simplest items—like children's masks during the pandemic—E1 and her husband used borrowed addresses from family members or her husband's workplace. When FBX started making deliveries in the favela, E1 described a newfound "sense of existence": "We feel seen [...] you feel very important, like you have dignity" (E1, 2023). According to Perez (2020), in the relationship between consumption and materialism, "[...] it is essential to consider consumption not merely as the acquisition of material and immaterial goods but to understand its complexity through cultural, symbolic, aesthetic, and affective investments in these recurrent and transformative dynamics of social life." The sense of "dignity in existence" through material culture not only underscores the need to think about consumption beyond practical reasons but also positions the activities of seeking, acquiring, possessing, and using goods as practices that empower individuals who might otherwise lack support from these objects.

Interviewee 2 (E2) shared a similar experience. She reported that before the pandemic, she rarely shopped online, as it was almost certain that nothing would arrive due to the absence of a ZIP code for their alley. When she did make purchases, she had to "ask for favors" from neighbors to use their addresses for delivery:

"Sometimes, depending on what you wanted to buy, you had to give the address of a street, like, 'Oh, take the number of this place and let them know,' or use the number of a little grocery store or a bar [...] and you had to check every day to see if it arrived" (E2, 2023).

For E2, FBX also facilitated access to goods and the possibility of consumption. "It's incredible, we thought we wouldn't have access, but it worked out." For her, FBX also enabled the growth of the home-based business she runs with her husband: "We sell mugs; if there's a promotion, we buy them, usually from Americanas and Mercado Livre." E2 also highlighted a fundamental aspect of this discussion: FBX employs local residents as delivery

staff—50 people in Paraisópolis alone, 10% of whom are women. Their familiarity with the area offers a distinct advantage, ensuring they do not get lost in the community’s unique geography.

In Paraisópolis, deliveries are made in various ways, depending on the region: by bicycle, car, motorcycle, van, tuk-tuk (specifically for deliveries from Americanas), or even on foot. The mobility of people and the circulation of goods—referred to as “mobile stuff” (NOGUEIRA, 2021)—are adapted to the local geography. As geographer Milton Santos (SANTOS, SOUZA & SILVEIRA, 1994) states, space must always be conceived as an inseparable set of systems of objects and systems of social and communicative actions. In this context, we draw upon Miller (2014) and his Theory of Objectification, which asserts that material culture possesses a “constant, solid, and strong” presence in human experience, constructing the stage upon which sociabilities occur (MILLER, 2014). In this sense, “every object has the potential to define the environment, establish identities, and dictate actions and behaviors in response to life’s situations” (NOGUEIRA, 2021). In this study, it became evident from the interviewees’ statements how material culture is intrinsically and directly related to the materiality of existence. Moreover, the unlocking of the ZIP code—a seemingly mechanical and systematic action—becomes a communicative or meaningful act, as the ZIP code’s placement transforms the area into a recognized space of existence.

The initiative by FBX reaches its peak with a partnership developed with Google. Together with the tech giant, FBX is implementing the Plus-Code project in Paraisópolis, a mapping system that, by registering the exact latitude and longitude of a location, assigns a unique code to each home. This code, represented as a “pin,” precisely indicates the property’s location, validating the area as a space for living, residence, and ultimately consumption. The significance of the pin in online shopping practices lies in its integration into the purchasing process: after entering the now-unblocked ZIP code, Paraisópolis residents can also input their property’s unique pin. With this pin registered, delivery drivers no longer face uncertainty about delivery locations, even for homes situated in alleys, rooftops, smaller streets, above other homes, or in hidden corners of the community. Each residence is identified and officially incorporated into the favela’s cartography, the city’s spatial organization, bureaucratic systems, and virtual maps like Google Maps.

By June 2023, Google’s mapping team had identified, via pins, 7,000 homes near the G10 Favelas Pavilion, where FBX is headquartered. By 2024, an additional 4,000 homes are planned to be mapped, with the partnership aiming to cover 100% of Paraisópolis. According to Giva, from April 2022 to March 2023, FBX delivered around one million packages in Paraisópolis, equivalent to over 500 million reais in goods. This demonstrated to FBX’s CEO and its retail and logistics partners that the favela holds significant value as a consumption entity and should be recognized as a hub for the movement of people, goods, and desires—and, undeniably, as a market worth serving. As Rodrigues (2023) states:

“[...] The 14,000 favelas across Brazil generate 200 billion reais. Any company that overlooks this market is missing a major opportunity to make money. Paraisópolis has 120,000 residents, more than many cities in the state of São Paulo. If it were a city, it would rank among the 300 largest in Brazil. Today, in Brazil, 20 million people—10% of the population—live in favelas (ARCHANGELI, 2023).”

With the unblocking of ZIP codes, the spatial prejudice that restricted the flow of goods—and consequently consumption practices—within the favela has also “unblocked” Paraisópolis residents’ social practices, as previously noted. Local entrepreneurship initiatives during and after the pandemic have further placed the community on the global media map, elevating Paraisópolis to a case study of business success in economically and socially vulnerable contexts.

Even before the successful implementation of the pandemic-response plan and its subsequent media attention, Paraisópolis had already been conducting a series of communicational, marketing, and branding activities. These include social and tourism projects (BORGES, 2012) that have reshaped the favela’s image beyond its geographic limits. However, the community’s activities during the pandemic amplified its media presence, garnering increased interest and visibility. Between 2022 and 2023, Paraisópolis representatives—particularly Gilson Rodrigues and Giva Pereira—were invited to speak and participate in national and international events such as the opening bell ceremony at the New York Stock Exchange, the Brazil Conference at Harvard University and MIT, and the Cannes Lions International Festival of Creativity, among others. Posts on Instagram profiles related to the community showcase the favela’s global presence, from magazine covers like *Vejinha São Paulo* to appearances on Chinese television and Brazil’s *Fantástico* on TV Globo.

Thus, symbolically, the favela of Paraisópolis circulates and facilitates the circulation of people, goods, and information successfully—despite the prevalent narratives about Brazilian favelas that often reinforce images

of poverty and chaos. “We do not want to be victimized because our achievements are reaching places we never imagined before,” asserts Rodrigues (2023). He concludes: “The negative perception of favelas is dissolving. Today, we cannot associate all favela residents with crime or extreme poverty” (RODRIGUES, 2023).

### Materialities in Motion: Notes for Future Research

“Access to goods and services improves daily life, mitigates the burden of stark differences and brutal separations experienced, and also helps us understand who we are and how we want to be seen and understood socially” (Perez, 2020, p. 114).

Having concluded the first phase of the research reported here—evaluating how the acquisition of products by Paraisópolis residents places the favela on consumption maps, social bureaucratic systems, and virtual city maps like Google Maps—the next step is to continue investigating the potential transformations experienced by and within the community as a result of overcoming the so-called “ZIP code prejudice.” In this sense, the second phase of the research will employ mobile methodologies (BÜSCHER, URRY & WITCHGER, 2011) to monitor, in real-time, the purchases made by residents along their delivery routes (via FBX’s system supported by Plus-Code).

By focusing on materialities in motion, the research aims to deepen the understanding of consumption practices in the favela, exploring the hypothesis that Paraisópolis has experienced—and continues to experience—transformations in its space and geography through the consumption of objects. These transformations go beyond the symbolic changes currently circulating in the media, which frame the favela as a successful post-pandemic case.

How does the circulation of people, goods, and information occur beyond the vicinity of the Pavilion/G10 Favelas, which houses FBX and serves as the hub for social entrepreneurship initiatives? Excluding the Pavilion’s surroundings, which areas of Paraisópolis engage most in e-commerce, and how are deliveries conducted—with or without Plus-Code? How is the community mapped under other mobility regimes—those of the militia, police, commercial associations, and residents—which operate in the favela amidst concerns that technological tools may monitor the movement of other (il)legal goods? What negotiations are necessary to coordinate all this activity? These are just some of the many possible questions for continued research in the second-largest favela in Brazil.

Nonetheless, it is essential to acknowledge the limitations encountered during the current phase of the investigation, which may pose challenges to be addressed in the future. The internal organization of G10 Favelas controls much of the communication within the community and with Paraisópolis’ network of stakeholders—a structure developed during the pandemic. By treating the community simultaneously as a “brand” and as a product to be consumed, this organization limits researchers’ and journalists’ access to the community, aiming to manage its image. This creates a significant methodological bias that was considered in the final analysis of this first phase and will undoubtedly need to be addressed in future investigations.

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