



Institute of Social Studies
Graduate School of Development Studies

Youth Politics and Intergenerational Relations

A Youth Network Seeking for Development and Empowerment in Recife

A Research Paper presented by:

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Brazil

In Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for Obtaining the Degree of:

Master of Arts in Development Studies

Specialization:

Politics of Alternative Development

Members of the Examining Committee:

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The Hague, The Netherlands

17 November 2006

This document represents part of the author's study programme while at the Institute of Social Studies; the views stated therein are those of the author and not necessarily those of the Institute.

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Acknowledgements

Many thanks indeed to all those individuals and institutions that directly or indirectly contributed to this paper, in special:

To my wife Angélica Rocha, my father João Bosco Cordeiro, my mother Maria Gorete Mesquita, my grandmother Luziele Coelho and to all other members of my big family in Brazil

To the greatest colleagues and professors one could have in ISS: Adriano Nuvunga (Mozambique), Aikaterini Kyrili (Greece), Almas Mahmud (Pakistan/Holland), Angela Collet (Brazil), Catharina Maria (Indonesia), Catherine Nunez (Philippines), Daniela Sanchez Lopez (Bolivia), Jessica Peterson (USA), Emmanuel Abeliwine (Ghana), Eriko Kameyama (Japan), Ernesto Macuacua (Mozambique), Fany Wedahuditama (Indonesia), Francisco Inacio Alar (Mozambique), Gabriela Borges de Andrade (Brazil), Gabriela Salinas Lanao (Peru), Glenda Wanjala (Kenya), Hermine Engel (South Africa), Isik Tuzun (Turkey), José Adalima (Mozambique), Karim Knio (Lebanon/Holland), Karin Hirdes (Holland), Karina Shalaby (Egypt/Canada), Kees Biekart (Holland), Kristian Tamtomo (Indonesia), Linda Herrera (USA/Egypt/Holland), Luciano Schmitz Simoes (Brazil), Marcia de Azevedo (Brazil), Marieke Nieuwendijk (Holland), Maya Trabin (USA/Israel), Mira Chowdhury (Holland), Mirna Mutiara (Indonesia), Mohamed Salih (Sudan/Holland), Nadia Vado (Nicaragua), Phaedra Veenendaal (Holland), Praveen Vempadapu (India), Rachel Kurian (India/Holland), Rene Edwards (Guyana/Canada), Rina Alluri (Canada), Setyo Budiantoro (Indonesia), Siddharth D'Souza (India), Tibor van Staveren (Holland), Yoliruth Nunez Mendoza (Peru) and all others

To the greatest friends who supported me the most: Alan Guedes (Brazil), Alessandro Deleon (Brazil), Alexandre Nicolini (Brazil), Ana Paula Lucena (Brazil), Andrés Thompson (Argentina/Uruguay), Antônio Nascimento (Brazil), Arturo Jordan (Brazil/Spain), Barbara Romero (El Salvador), Beatriz Azeredo (Brazil), Carla Beatriz (Brazil), Carolina Trevisan (Brazil), Celina del Felice (Argentina/Holland), Claudia Feitosa (Brazil), Cláudia Fidélis (Brazil), Diogo Souto Maior (Brazil), Ditta Dolejsiova (Slovakia/Holland), Eduardo Rombauer (Brazil), Elaine Bonfim (Brazil), Galo de Souza (Brazil), George Teixeira (Brazil/Germany), Germana Barros (Brazil), Gorete Schmitz (Brazil), Hilary Burger (Brazil/USA), Isaque Menezes (Brazil), Jonah Wittkamper (USA/Brazil), Jorge Boda Troper (Brazil/Portugal), Juan Espinoza (Bolivia), Kamila Vasconcelos (Brazil), Karina Moraes (Brazil), Kelly Ribeiro (Brazil), Leandro David (Brazil), Lis Hirano Wittkamper (Brazil/USA), Ludmila Marques (Brazil), Luiza Teixeira (Brazil), Marcelo Cavalcanti (Brazil), Mariana Lyra (Brazil), Marina Macedo (Brazil), Olivia Martin (Brazil/UK/Spain), Paula Chies Schommer (Brazil), Piotr Uhma (Poland), Regina Cabral (Brazil), Rodrigo Carreiro (Brazil), Rogério Renato Silva (Brazil), Romel Pinheiro (Brazil), Roseni Sena (Brazil) and all others

To LASPAU, for all the support and professionalism: Isola Spence (USA), James Ito-Adler (USA), Ninive Machado (Brazil/USA), Sonia Wallenberg (Colombia/USA) and all others

To the Ojalitos friends and comrades from the LAC, in Amsterdam: Angélica Rocha (Brazil), Barbara Paternotte (Holland), Carolina Flores (Guatemala), Marco Cevallos (Ecuador), Mariela Chyrikins (Argentina), Marten van de Berge (Holland), Pablo (Chile), Susana Sanz (Spain), Suzanne Kruyt (Holland), Valentijn Wortelboer (Holland) and all others

And to these organisations, which my interaction with was essential to guide me through this process: Academia de Desenvolvimento Social (Brazil), CMI Recife (Brazil), Êxito d'Rua (Brazil), Fundacja Harcerstwa Polskiego (Poland), ISS - Institute of Social Studies (Holland), LASPAU - Academic and Professional Programs for the Americas (USA), Movimento Passe Livre Recife (Brazil), OJALÁ - Autonome Jongerenorganisatie voor Latijns-Amerika (Holland), Rede de Resistência Solidária (Brazil), UNOY - United Network of Young Peace Builders (Holland), Ventilador Cultural (Brazil) and W.K. Kellogg Foundation (USA/Brazil)

Abstract

Since the 1950s, development researchers and practitioners have been focusing on understanding ways to overcome poverty. During this process, many actors and issues have been identified as crucial for development, such as the women and the environment. Youth comes along such process, mostly as a perceived issue (youth development), but also as social actors (the role of youth to achieve development). This paper adds a contribution to literature and policies analysing intergenerational power relations between youth-led actors and non-youth-led actors in society. The case in point is the Network of Solidary Resistance (herein mentioned simply as RRS), a youth-led network based in one of the most unequal cities of Brazil, Recife. Its political agenda towards society is contrasted with the society's agenda towards the youth, exposing some traces of discrimination from society towards the youth, as well as some tiredness and resistance from the youth towards its external society. The central question behind this research has to do with the level of influence of organised segments of youth in society. Such influence is revealed to be higher within the communities the youth in case work with and for, rather than within macro structures of power in society, where the root-causes of the communities' problems are reported to come from. In addition, this research brings attention to the differences between youth policy and youth politics and the need for more agency based approaches toward the youth, beyond the typical needs and rights based approaches. The empirical data is constantly contrasted with clusters of knowledge within the literature, specifically in Political Science and Sociology. The main theories used here fit within youth and society, and power and development literatures. The main arguments to study the quality of intergenerational relationships as a mean for achieving development is due to [a] the fact that youth is the only character that crosscut the whole society and change of "category" (the youngsters of today will soon become the adults of tomorrow), and [b] the phenomenon of poverty and inequality in Latin America is persisting during many generations already, from parents to offspring, creating an intergenerational poverty circles that must be broken in order to stop poverty and recover development. In the last chapter, the paper also stresses the need of further research referring to the paradoxical locus of intergenerational and agency based approaches for long-term sustainable development.

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Acronyms & Abbreviations

ECA	Estatuto da Criança e do Adolescente / The Brazilian Child's and Adolescent's Statute
LETS	Local Exchange Trade Systems
ISS	Institute of Social Studies
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MST	<i>Movimento dos Sem Terra</i> Landless Movement
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
PSDB	<i>Partido da Social Democracia Brasileira</i> Social Democratic Party in Brazil
PT	<i>Partido dos Trabalhadores</i> Worker's Party
RRS	<i>Rede de Resistência Solidária</i> Network of Solidary Resistance
UFRJ	Federal University of Rio de Janeiro
UN	United Nations
WB	World Bank
WKKF	W.K. Kellogg Foundation
WSF	World Social Forum

1. Introduction

1.1. Initial Remarks

Since the 1950s, development studies have been focusing on understanding ways to overcome poverty and promote justice. Along the process, many obvious actors and issues have been identified as crucial for development, such as the women and the environment. Youth comes along such process, mostly as a perceived issue, but also as social actors. As an issue, the youth is seen as a target of development, an age-group that must be protected and prepared for a healthy and productive adult life; as actors, the youth uses its agency to promote its political agenda and interests within society.

The uniqueness of working with the youth for development ends is that youth is the only character that crosscuts the whole society and changes of "category"; all those who are young today will, under normal conditions of life, become adults tomorrow. Other categories are not as changeable as the youth is, being it gender, ethnicity, culture or whatever. This more transitory condition makes the youth a segment that is very important to transmit changes (from local to structural ones) throughout generations, once those who experience high levels of empowerment while young, will certainly pay more attention to the youth-adult relationship in the coming generations. Another important factor still is that along the time, poverty (like wealth) is passed on from parents to offspring, creating an intergenerational poverty circle (Morán and Aldaz-Carroll 2001; Morán 2004; WKKF 2005a; Thompson 2006a) that must be broken in order to stop poverty and recover development. Consequently, the use of youth's agency is precedent for breaking such vicious generational circles, but how is this agency being used? How is youth organising itself? How is the youth influencing society? What is the youth's political agenda? To approach such questions this research studies a number of youth organisations in Recife/Brazil, in search for some answers.

Being one of the oldest cities of the Americas, Recife is historically one of the most unequal cities of Brazil (Galeano 1973; PNUD 2005). Its 3,6 millions inhabitants live with a Gini index of 0,68, the highest among all Brazilian capitals (FJP 2003). On table 1, you can see that both in terms of inequality (Gini index) and household income (labour work and government transfers) the situation of

Recife has been aggravated along the 1990s, being today one of the top problematic city of the country.

Table 1: Inequalities in Brazilian capital cities, according to the 1991 and 2000 decade census (FJP 2003)

Capital City	State	City Gini Index, 1991	City Gini Index, 2000	Percentage of population's income from labour work, 1991	Percentage of population's income from labour work, 2000	Percentage of population's income from government transfers, 1991	Percentage of population's income from government transfers, 2000
Aracaju	SE	0,62	0,64	81,9%	66,0%	12,9%	17,8%
Belém	PA	0,60	0,65	83,9%	68,9%	10,8%	14,8%
Belo Horizonte	MG	0,61	0,62	82,1%	69,4%	11,4%	16,3%
Boa Vista	RR	0,57	0,58	82,4%	81,0%	3,8%	7,3%
Brasília	DF	0,61	0,64	88,3%	74,0%	6,8%	12,4%
Campô Grande	MS	0,58	0,61	89,8%	76,2%	6,5%	11,6%
Cuiabá	MT	0,60	0,65	89,7%	74,4%	5,4%	9,4%
Curitiba	PR	0,55	0,59	83,9%	73,2%	9,8%	12,7%
Florianópolis	SC	0,55	0,57	81,2%	68,9%	12,2%	15,3%
Fortaleza	CE	0,65	0,66	82,5%	70,6%	12,1%	14,5%
Goiânia	GO	0,57	0,61	86,6%	75,0%	7,8%	10,7%
João Pessoa	PB	0,62	0,63	79,1%	68,3%	14,6%	17,6%
Macapá	AP	0,56	0,62	88,1%	72,7%	7,0%	8,7%
Maceió	AL	0,62	0,68	78,7%	64,6%	14,4%	16,1%
Manaus	AM	0,57	0,64	86,4%	70,3%	6,4%	9,7%
Natal	RN	0,60	0,64	80,3%	67,3%	14,9%	17,7%
Palmas	TO	0,63	0,65	94,9%	76,3%	2,4%	5,5%
Porto Alegre	RS	0,57	0,61	79,1%	68,9%	15,0%	18,2%
Porto Velho	RO	0,57	0,62	87,7%	75,3%	4,5%	7,9%
Recife	PE	0,67	0,68	78,6%	65,1%	14,9%	19,2%
Rio Branco	AC	0,60	0,62	87,3%	72,9%	8,2%	12,8%
Rio de Janeiro	RJ	0,61	0,62	76,1%	63,7%	16,4%	18,5%
Salvador	BA	0,65	0,66	80,5%	66,6%	11,6%	14,6%
São Luís	MA	0,61	0,65	83,3%	71,3%	10,1%	13,2%
São Paulo	SP	0,56	0,62	83,7%	71,5%	8,3%	11,5%
Teresina	PI	0,63	0,65	82,5%	72,8%	11,7%	15,0%
Vitória	ES	0,58	0,61	80,8%	69,3%	12,6%	15,9%

During the 20th century, Recife has experienced a strong economical and political downfall; however, on its cultural aspect the city is still tremendously recognised. Recife is home for many different Afro-Brazilian and indigenous religions, due to the strong miscegenation among native indigenous, Europeans and Africans that took place in the region, as baseline for the creation of the Brazilian identity (Freyre 1946). Furthermore, Recife is home for many musical rhythms, like the youthful and extremely political Manguê Beat (Galinsky 2002; Vanspauwen 2005). The Manguê Beat was a kind of political expression that took place in the 1990s and that was followed by an active and politicised youth hip-hop movement in the 2000s. Within this hip-hop movement were born the first cells of what today is known by RRS (Network of Solidary Resistance) an independent network of youth-led actors that names itself as an affective and solidary space of provocative dialogue for the raising of new community practices, with around 60 grassroots organisations and 250 autonomous individual connected (RRS 2005). Besides the

RRS, the metropolitan Youth Forum of Recife conducted a research that revealed about 80 local youth-led organisations in the city, showing that nowadays, there are over one hundred known and active youth-led organisations in Recife, assembling an incalculable number of thousands of young people (Queiroz 2004). This scenario, together with the previous contacts I have myself in the city, made of it the perfect case for this research.

This introductory chapter is briefly explaining the methodological aspects of this research, including the methods, the research question and the elucidation of some initial ideas. Chapter 2 introduces a theoretical background in the field of youth and development, especially linking youth to society, power and development; concepts which are essential for the analysis of the case. Next, chapter 3 and 4 draw upon the case-study and its intergenerational relations. The fifth chapter analyses this relationship and reveals some challenging questions towards youth, society power and development. Finally, in chapter 6 the final conclusions are presented. It is important to stress that this paper aims to be as critical and analytical as possible, not forgetting to suggest possible alternatives (or reflections) to the faced problems.

1.2. Research Question and Methodology

My engagement with youth and development dates from the beginning of the 1990s, when I firstly became involved with a youth-led cultural organisation in Fortaleza/Brazil. Latter on, I joined a more youth-led political organisation in Recife/Brazil, within the student movement context. After 1998, I created with another friend the nucleus of what came to be a youth-led NGO, the Social Development Academy Institute. In this last one, I faced many problems, due to the fact that the adult world, unconsciously or not, had some prejudice against the capability of a young person or a youth-led organisation to seek and implement projects for the development of society as a whole, and not only for the youth itself. I was facing some kind of another very unequal power relation within society that I only had felt before within my own family and the schools I had been to. As a result, curiosity with doubt, and optimism with fear were subsequently natural and inevitable; together, they put me in a state of personal restlessness towards the world and society. This research is then intensely affected by this historicity, especially after I realised that I was far from being the only one feeling this pressure. A legion of other young people and youth-led organisations, in their diversity, were just in the same mood. Something was happening; our supporters

were basically among ourselves. What are the problems with this relationship (youth-society)? What are the consequences? Who is aware of it? How can the youth (and the adults) act upon such circumstances? How can the youth effectively exercise more influence within the society, once we are the ones to handle it, not only in the future, but here and now? Those were some of the initial puzzled questions brought to this research by its very beginning.

To solve the puzzle, the case study of part of the youth-led movement in Recife, through the RRS, was a clear choice due to the already exposed reasons. Its quality of political organisation and quantity of members were also important factors. Afterwards, the research question was organised in a way to keep it grounded without losing its essential elements. This paper's driving question is: To what extent has the RRS Recife youth network influenced adult society since its birth in early 2005? Furthermore, some sub-questions are: How is this influence attempt taking place? What is unique about youth-led actors in society? What can we learn from this intergenerational relationship?

In order to answer this question, I needed to study intergenerational relationships between youth-led actors (a group composed by members of RRS that agreed in participating in this research) and non-youth-led actors (a group formed by actors that had been mentioned during the first group's interviews). For the first group, sub-questions related to their origin, composition, self-recognition, political agenda, initiatives and projects, impact of their work, links established with other society actors, and problems and benefits of the relationships they maintain with other organisations in society, were raised and compiled. With the second group, both semi-structured interviews and document analysis were used, being the focus of analysis their origin, composition, self-recognition as power-holders, awareness about the current youth-led thinking, level of openness and influence (as they perceive them), and form and quality of interaction with the youth, was carried out. A total of twelve dialogues were executed, eight with the first group, involving about forty young activist members of many youth-led organisations within the RRS context, and four with the second group.

Due to the qualitative nature of the research, the data collection methods included a variety of instruments, as individual and group interviews, informal chats, participation in public events, and participation in internal meetings, always in a case-by-case basis, depending on the availability and openness of the

participants and institutions. To compare the data collected from the two groups, truth tables and network analysis were used (Scott 1991; Burris 2006).

Some limitations emerge from this approach. For instance, the view here in this paper is partial, and cannot be generalised about the complete scene of the youth in Recife or the world; in consequence, there is a bias on it, given by the case-study. However, the importance of the analysis lies on the comprehension that the boundaries between youth and development may be blurring, and hence it needs to be amplified. Secondly, many youth-led organisations in Recife revealed to be very much suspicious about being interviewed for a research in a foreign university, which the results they would only see months later. Therefore, more flexible methods of interviews were necessary, like described before (informal chats, participation in public events, and participation in internal meetings). The fact that I had been personally engaged, from within, in the youth-led movement in Recife helped considerably to build trust about the process; otherwise, the resistance aspect of RRS would have possibly prevailed; fortunately, it didn't. Moreover, the majority of the interviews occurred in Portuguese; so, any problem with translation into English from those is of my total responsibility, as author and translator. The same is true for any literature or document in both Portuguese and Spanish.

Another important aspect is also that the findings from my empirical data are constantly contrasted with the literature that forms this research's theoretical framework. Such framework is grounded in both classic and modern publications, from academic books, journals and researches to reports, texts and documents. This compensation is important to balance the large availability of academic material about youth as an issue for development, in detriment of the less available production in the field of youth as actors. As you will see in the next chapter, youth, society, power, empowerment, participation and development are key elements of our theoretical framework. These elements provide this research a perspective which is closer to Political Science and Sociology, in detriment of Anthropology and Economy. This was a conscious choice, because these two last sciences are already largely used to analyse the youth in relation to the development of society; another reason is still the size constraint of the paper. Nonetheless, I believe that the four sciences form together the perfect cluster of knowledge to understand better and analyse this relationship and its consequences.

2. Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework is divided in three parts. Firstly, concepts and understandings about youth and society are addressed, due to the need to understand the distinctive roles of youth in society and the different approaches from society towards the youth. Secondly, youth concepts are contrasted with classical and modern ideas on power and collective action, where critical elements about empowerment and participation are brought up. Finally, the changing role of youth in development is also given an especial attention.

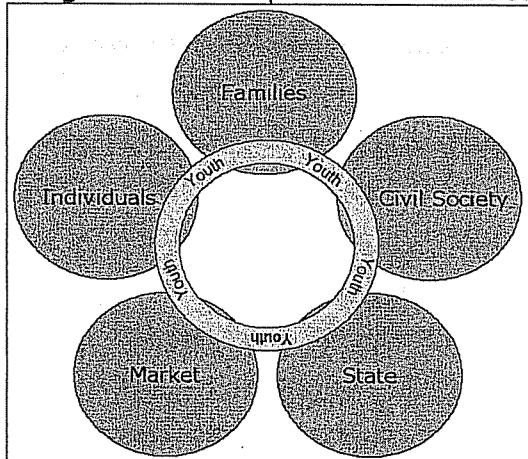
2.1. Youth and Society: Clearing the Picture

Alain Touraine says that the youth is just a reflex of society itself (Touraine 1996), being at the same time its coming (a source of change and evolution) and its menace (a source of trouble and threat). This is an interesting view that elucidates how diverse and contradictory society is in itself, and so is the youth just the same. Both society and youth represent a collective of diverse and heterogeneous actors, being the youth part of society's realm. As a result, defining society is an exercise of looking and understanding its diversity. Many try to open up the box and reveal the internal differentiations and variations in social structures, like primary social relationships of identity and solidarity among kinship groups, ethnic groups, primary groups and territorial groupings (Parsons 1961a); economical relationships of production and maintenance, like capitalists, labourers and the division of labour (Smith 1961; Weber 1961), the ownership of private properties (Pollack and Maitland 1961), the household micro-economic system (Play 1961), and the macro-economic development (Schumpeter 1961); relationships of stratification and social mobility, like class stratification and struggle (Marx 1961); relationships of social organisation, authority and power (Parsons 1961b); and lastly, relationships of religious beliefs, systems and society (Durkheim 1961). Overall, I usually define society myself as the sum of the relationships and processes between all individuals and organisations in a given space, time, and culture.

Within society, the main actors vary in many categories. I see five broader categories, including the state machinery, the marketplace realm, the civil society space, the families (and households), and the individuals (citizens and non-citizens). Besides that, there are numerous other crosscutting categories, like the

youth, the men, the women, the elderly, the children, the adults, classes, casts and so on, depending the cultural aspects of the society. These crosscutting categories are all around those broader categories, populating part of them (see image 1). Each one of them forms a variety of different relationships with the youth, and all other crosscutting categories. As an individual, a young person is subject of rights and duties towards all broader categories of society, sometimes also subject of lack of rights also; within the family or the household, a young person is usually exposed to power relations that make her/him dependent of the relatives' will; in the marketplace, young people are usually seen as consumers and as labour force, many times cheap ones; in civil society, the youth is mostly seen as a target group, but some already see it as actors; and within the state, the youth can also be a target group, subject of rights and duties, but as citizens it can also exercise an important political role in societal and public affairs.

Image 1: Possible representation of the society and the youth (Cordeiro 2006b)



Note: Author's creation.

Defining youth implies the same level complexity. All above differentiations also apply to it, as it is a part of society itself. Additionally, the word 'youth' may suggest very different meanings, and the simple exercise of looking at a dictionary reveals to us the general public comprehensions about it, like for instance: "1. the time of life when a person is young"; "2. the quality or state of being young"; "3. (often disapproving) a young man: [illustration] the fight was started by a gang of youths"; and "4. (also the youth) young people considered as a group" (Oxford University 2001). These four definitions expose some of the important dichotomies surrounding the relationship between youth and society.

Youth as a unity, youth as a diversity: Youth, even in the singular form of the word, should be understood as a pure diversity and plurality, just like the word society is, otherwise, we would always have to refer to societies (in its plural form).

The most common perceived differentiations within youth are: rural or urban youth (Carneiro 1998; Ballinger 2006); poor, middle class or rich youth (Tommasi 2005, 1-Nov); included or excluded youth (WEF 2000); student and non-student youth (Dayson 2006); gendered youth and sexuality (male, female, heterosexual, homosexual, bisexual, transsexual and so on) (Edwards 2004; Russell 2006); and different religious youth (Webster 2006); among others.

Youth as a biological age group, youth as a social constructed identity: The two first meanings on the dictionary are part of a classical dichotomy within youth and development studies, between youth as a biological age group and youth as a social constructed identity. Youth is a concept usually related to a certain age group; therefore, to a biological concept. The UN system, for instance, defines youth as the group of people between the ages of 15 and 24 (UN 2005a); however many other definitions are available, like those by Nicola Ansell and Ben White (see table 2), but there's no common agreement on these definitions; moreover, there are many inconsistencies among the academic world, the policy making world and the real world when applying a biological approach to define youth. Many countries have different official definition of youth for their youth policies: for El Salvador, it is between 7-18 years of age, for Colombia between 12-26 years, for Costa Rica between 12-35, for Mexico 12-29, for Argentina 14-30, for Bolivia, Ecuador, Peru, and the Dominican Republic 15-24, for Guatemala and Portugal 15-25, for Chile, Cuba, Spain, Panama and Paraguay 15-29, for Nicaragua 18-30 and for Honduras it is between 0-25 (Reyes 2006). This biological understanding is counter argued by the idea that youth is also understood as the state of being young; being therefore a state of mind, or a state of spirit, that varies from culture to culture (Côté and Allahar 1996). This is a social constructed approach, and as such, anyone, being of any age, could be considered of youthful or non-youthful behaviour. As a matter of fact, it is usual to find older people that still keep a strong youthful attitude towards life and the world; while, on the other hand, it is not difficult either to find youngsters whose behaviour and attitude are far from being considered youthful. Another idea upon social constructed approaches towards youth is the cultural concept of generations and generational conflict (Baskir 2006), a possible result of lack of dialogue and power balance between generations.

Table 2: Aged based definitions of youth (Ansell 2005; White 2005)

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24														
Infant																																						
Early childhood: 0-8																																						
Child: 0-17																																						
										Adolescent: 10-19																												
													Teenager: 13-19																									
																				Adult, young: 20-24																		
															Youth: 15-24																							

Note: Rows 1 and 2 ('infant' and 'early childhood') have been added to Nicola Ansell by Prof. Dr. Ben White, in his lecture on "Children, Youth & Development", at the Institute of Social Studies, in The Hague, Netherlands, on the 22nd of November 2005.

Youth as a problem, youth as a solution: The third Oxford Dictionary's meaning for youth reveals the taboo already stressed by Alain Touraine (1996) of youth as a problem and youth as a solution; but unfortunately, the dictionary only brings about the more conservative side of this dichotomy, looking at youth as a problem. Indeed, there are many defenders of such idea, and many existing organisations dealing with it. Three main approaches are seen within this logic: youth as thugs, as user and as victims (Jeffs and Smith 1999); furthermore, others analyse predictive and preventive factors to avoid the "problem" (IYD 2003). The main critique to this view is about the negative label of marginal or rebel given to the youth, and therefore the conservative response that automatically comes in forms of control and punishment (Foucault 1975). From another perspective, more progressist views point to youth as a source of solutions, and sources of renew. Many conferences have been held and many websites created to debate and to spread solutions coming from segments of the youth, both toward the youth themselves and society in general. Recent ideas on partnering with the youth (Rocha *et al.* 2005; Tancredi 2005; WKKF 2005b; Thompson 2006a) show that the youth have an important role to bring the society more alternative solutions.

Youth as future, youth as present time: From the previous dichotomies, it is easy to develop the question whether youth is the owner of the future or of the present time. There is still an important concern stating that youth points to the future of society; nevertheless, it is very important to realise that many young people stress that it is not only the future that belongs to them, but as they are "natives of the present" (Margulis and Urresti 1998), they need to be heard and to be taken into account right now, with no delay, both in terms of youth rights and in terms of youth empowerment.

Youth as a target group, youth as an actor: The last Oxford Dictionary's meaning for youth exposes yet another dichotomy, on youth as target group or

youth as a group of action. Depending how one finds herself/himself over the previous dichotomies, she/he will relate in a very different way to the youth. On the one hand, more conservative understandings on unity, age, problem and future may open space for treating the youth as mere target groups. On the other hand, more progressist understandings on diversity, identity, solution and present open space for treating the youth as an actual actor in society; therefore, realising that the youth should be considered and should participate in all levels of decision making in our current society, in a true intergenerational dialogue. Targeting the youth is still necessary in some circumstances, some will argue, especially in cases of poverty, delinquency, lack of rights, and so forth; but, my main point here is to argue that the youth of today face a similar problem that the women faced (and unfortunately still face) of being sub judged by other actors in society, the adults. This youth-adult relationship can be a source of conflict (Baskir 2006), but also a source of partnership (Tancredi 2005; Thompson 2006b) and more equalitarian relationship (Rocha et al. 2005). The more visible circumstance where this target/actor dichotomy takes place is probably in formal and informal educational processes, when the relationship between young people (usually as the educated ones) and educators become a power relation (and it usually does) (Rocha et al. 2005).

In spite of this, I stress that it does not stop here, simply understanding the difference between youth as a target group or as social actors; in addition, this analytical framework needs to distinguish the different levels of power that youth actors can achieve in order to check their level of influence within society. Previously said, this research brings about another perspective of studying the youth: youth as a power structure within society. For such, it integrates the notion of youth from an individualistic outlook (young person or young people power) to the notion of youth as collectives (youth-led actors).

2.2. Youth and Power: Critical Points

To have a grounded departure point to analyse the intersection between youth and power, let us first define power and empowerment. In Sociology and Political Science power is defined in a variety of ways; however, the most common explanation defines power as the "ability to impose one's will on others" (Weber 1962), linking its definition to authority, control and influence. In addition, the principal dichotomy within power debate is related to the idea of power over or power with; on the first possibility, power is a zero-sum game with winners and losers; while on the second option, power is a win-win game where every single

individual or group can raise its own empowerment without taking it from others. From my standpoint, I believe that both situations happen constantly. Other classical dichotomies refer to power in relation to the sociological battle between agency and structure, Social Constructivism and Positivism, Machiavelli and Hobbes (Clegg 2004). The twentieth century's debate on power is largely influenced by the work of the German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche, who states that life represents a will to power, because will to power is will to life (Nietzsche 1886). Many theories deal with power, like the classical Rational Choice (Scott 2000), Marxism and Post-Marxism (Carver 2000); and most recently also the Feminist theories on power.

Lukes raises his theory on the three dimensionality of power, breaking a historical tradition of interpreting power through single sided and simplistic definitions. On his first dimension, he sees power as decision making, where agent "A" influences the behaviour of agent "B", generating strong resistance by "B". On the second one, he defines power as an agenda setting, where agent "A" defines the agenda, preventing agent "B" to voice her/his agenda, preventing conflicts to be discussed or certain issues to be raised. On his final dimension, he draws power as a thought control, where agent "A" defines what counts as a grievance, in such way that agent "B" accepts that she/he has no relevant issue to be raised (Lukes 1974; Vibe et al. 2002). On the other hand, Michel Foucault adds an important contribution to the power debate analysing the relation between power and knowledge (Foucault 1969), and latter on the political and societal analyses of power as discipline and punishment (Foucault 1975) and on the manifold forms of domination that can be exercised within society (Foucault 1976). It is precisely within Lukes' and Foucault's models of analysis on power that this research will analyse the relations between the youth and society. Finally, my definition of power for this research is on politics as the power, being the power of the ability to achieve a desired political outcome (Haywood 2002), whereby it can be either positive or negative, depending on three variable I add here: position (location in society), level of awareness/knowledge (including self-awareness and self-knowledge) and fears (internally and externally, that limit action and empowerment). This combination completes my analytical framework between power and youth, including youth empowerment.

An important understanding between empowerment and participation is needed, due to the differences among the society's approaches towards the youth and youth's approaches towards society. In Brazil, youth protagonism (Costa 2001; Costa and Vieira 2006) is the principal strategy used by non-youth-led actors to

implement youth right based approaches. Their final outcome is to change their targeted youngsters into protagonists of their own lives in society; being this an end in itself. Youth participation, hence, has been used as one of the most important tools for young people to become protagonists. As a result, many NGOs and even governments are opening more and more spaces, with their own agenda, and inviting young people to participate on them; mostly to discuss youth issues like education, health, employment, sexuality, family related problem and so forth. These are invited spaces of participation (Cornwall 2002; Sanchez 2006) that, even being well intentioned, easily become spaces of consultation, and sometimes of unintended tokenism and manipulation (Arnstein 1969; Hart 1992). To avoid it, some define participation as citizen's involvement in real decision making (Biekart 1999), directly or indirectly linking the concept to empowerment.

For empowerment to take place there should be a pre-condition of disempowerment (Kabeer 2001); my point, thus, is that youth has been facing such pre-condition for a long time. Also, "empowerment refers to the structural conditions which affect the allocations of power in a society and give access to its resources" (Breton 1994). The combination of these definitions will allow me to look at youth empowerment from a multifaceted perspective of empowered and disempowered youth, its agency, its structure and its relation with macro power structures in society (Hunter 1953; Mills 1956).

The youth itself can behave as a power structure. For that condition, it must be organised in collectives, due to a simple assumption, that collective action is the most effective and important basis for political action; therefore, also for empowerment. At this point, three key concepts are: youth collectives, youth movement and youth power.

By youth collective I mean any kind of youth-led group, organisation or network, being it formal or informal, legal or not, professional or volunteer, revolutionary or reformist, composed by two or more young people (at any age), that shares any common identity or objective. From this definition, of course, I exclude those youth agglomerations that do not necessarily share any identity or achievement. For me, the main characteristic of any youth collective is to be youth-led (Rocha 2006), independently of its end-goals; nevertheless, others say that youth organisations are those which goals are focused on youth issues, serving the needs of the young people, being them youth-led or not (UN 2005b). For that

reason, I am making use of the expression "youth-led organisation", to differ it from the generality of the term "youth organisation".

There are few definitions for youth movement. Applying social movement theories, it is easy to get to misleading conclusions that there is no such thing as a youth movement. Both my understanding and experience tell me to define it through the empirical observation of the phenomenon, rather than through social movement theories. Through the realisation of such impressive social phenomenon, its presence becomes undeniable and obvious, even though, it is still not very much recognised, especially in the field of development. There is a key question to help to understand the phenomenon: what does the youth movement seek to achieve? And the answer may be very tricky. Two similar, but different, things should be distinguished: a pro-youth movement and a youth-led movement. The first one is composed by any (young or not) person or any (youth-led or not) organisation that share the common objective of fighting for pro-youth policies and for youth rights, while the second one is composed by young people (as individuals) and youth-led organisations that fight for a variety of issues in society. The youth-led movement is diverse in its own essence; its nature and political agenda is equally diverse, but also complementary; and it is somehow engaged in a bigger claim for change from local to global societies (Cordeiro 2005b). The constituency of the youth-led movement has its basis on both young activists and, mainly, youth-led organisations. For the effect of this research, my focus lies on the youth-led movement, and not on the pro-youth movement.

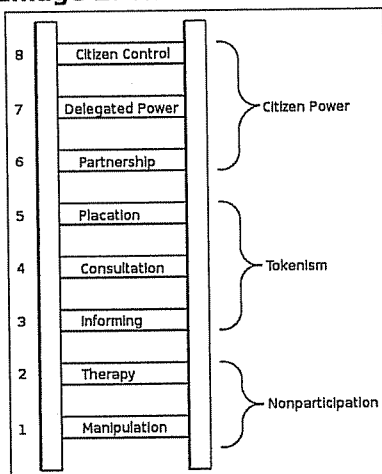
After all, by youth power I mean the ability of youth collectives to pursue and achieve a desired political outcome within society.

In concert with empowerment, another important concept is participation. Indeed, participation and empowerment are two close concepts, once participation is ultimately about decision making and for that empowerment is needed. Even being related, there is no causality between one and another. On the one hand participation is understood as both means and ends for the people to directly participate in political, economical or social decisions in issues that affect their life; on the other hand empowerment is meant as the ability of individuals, groups and organisations of achieving some autonomy and independence, as well as "the structural conditions which affect the allocations of power in a society and give access to its resources" (Breton 1994). Furthermore, participation is also seen as complementary to empowerment, as a way to encourage people to assume their

rights and to strengthen popular organisations, through cognitive, psychological, political and economical dimensions (Molyneux and Lazar 2003).

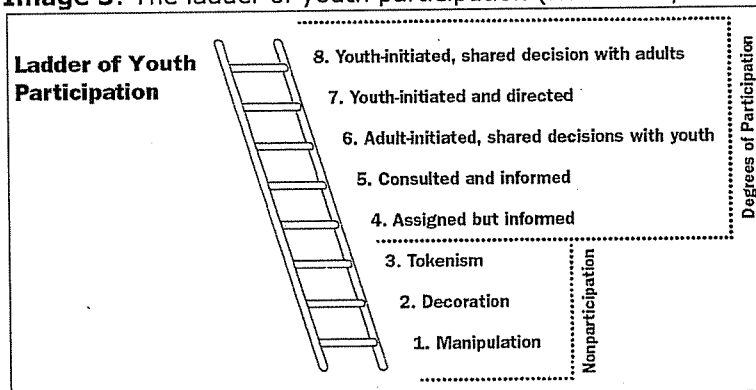
The challenge for the youth and their relationships within society lies on the connection between both, as foreseen by Sherry Arnstein (1969), when she clearly defines participation as citizen power; furthermore she distinguishes the participation in a qualitative scale, the ladder of citizen participation (ibid.).

Image 2: The ladder of citizen participation (Arnstein 1969)



Although this scheme cannot be generalised, it adds that there may be different qualities of participation/empowerment, and it opens up the box of such concepts in a more analytical and critical way. Non-participation and tokenism are still present on this power relationship between youth and society; therefore, this initial idea of the ladder evolved into a new ladder, of youth participation, by Roger Hart.

Image 3: The ladder of youth participation (Hart 1992; Marx et al. 2005)



Eventually, both ladders are important tools to analyse the qualitative level of participation and empowerment; however, they may lead the reader to the

misleading perception to reach higher levels of participation needed to climb the entire ladder up, step by step from the bottom to the top in a causality function, what may not be necessarily accurate. As any other social process, participation and empowerment are flexible and unpredicted processes, and factors like political will, power relation and awareness are essentials to determine the movements of the quality of empowerment and participation.

2.3. Youth and Development: Changing Roles

The role of youth in development seems to be changing rapidly. After feminism (1950s and 1960s), environmentalism (1960s and 1970s), democracy (1980s and 1990s) and security (2000s), youth seems to be the brand new issue blossoming in development practices and studies in the 2000s. Some evidences are found within a large spectrum, from our global governance system to grassroots. For instance, after big conferences and festivals about youth and development held in Senegal, Portugal and Panama, in April 2005 the United Nations launches its report "Youth and the Millennium Development Goals" (UN 2005b), followed, just six months latter, by its "World Youth Report 2005: Young people today and in 2015" (UN 2005a). Soon after, in September 2006, it is the World Bank that launches its World Development Report 2007, entitled "Development and the Next Generation" (WB 2006), completely focused on youth's education, employment, health, families and citizenship. Apart of those big inter-governmental organizations, more independent developmental NGOs are also paying more attention to the youth in society, like the W.K. Kellogg Foundation and its youth partnership program in Latin America (Tancredi 2005; Thompson 2006b), and Oxfam Australia with its International Youth Parliament (Oxfam 2000/2003), among some others.

When analysing these new approaches, an important difference arise especially between inter-governmental organisations and developmental NGOs: the first group is still focusing primarily on youth as a targeted group to be transformed and protected by society; while, the second one seems to be investing in youth as a real actor capable of positively transform society. Even though, it is key to clarify here that such conclusion comes from the analysis of WKKF and Oxfam Australia only; therefore, it cannot be generalised for all developmental NGOs. Indeed, many are still treating the youth as a target group only or even do not see any need to work with/for the youth at all.

One way or another, the importance of youth in development appears to be changing rapidly, but through the hand of non-youth actors. If the youth itself wants to have some agency or influence in this scenario, it will need to dig more into it. Some possible explanations for this change may lay in different reasons, such as: the current demographic "youth bulge" is one of the possible reasons: "today, 1.5 billion people are ages 12-24 worldwide, 1.3 billion of them in developing countries, the most ever in history" (WB 2006:4); as over 86% of the youth population is located in developing countries, the intergenerational poverty trap/circle (Morán and Aldaz-Carroll 2001; Morán 2004; WKKF 2005b; Thompson 2006a) is almost certainly to persist; a considerable number of incidents have been generally attributed to young people in the recent years, like the last French youth upraise in October/November 2005 (Cordeiro 2005a), the stereotype of young male Muslims as primary suspects of terrorism (Sullivan and Partlow 2006), and in November 2005 the youth upraise in Recife against the increased city's public transport fare (Silva 2005); also, the increasing number of youth-led organisations (Queiroz 2004), and the changes in the political behaviour of the youth (Abramo and Venturi 2000; IBASE and Pólis 2005; Tommasi and Brandão 2006); and finally, the realisation of the youth as a potential actors to promote positive change and to address both youth issues and the development of society as a whole (Oxfam 2000/2003; Rocha et al. 2005; Tancredi 2005).

Above and beyond, it is important to figure out the meaning of the so used term "development". As another broad term, it has different interpretations in different circles. Among social and economical sciences, from my perspective, development is commonly associated with social processes that lead to positive change; albeit, there are many interpretations, traced back to historical roots attributed to Marxist and Hegelian ideas, and not only after the creation of the UN in the 1940s (Leys 1996). Other explanations suggest development in terms of modernisation processes and its implications (Gaonkar 2001; Buruma and Margalit 2004); and still others in terms of the dependency (Frank 1969; Cardoso and Faletto 1979) and the new-dependency (Castells and Laserna 1994) theories. After the Cold War, the dominant theories of development are more close to economics, based on growth, free markets, representative democracy, opportunities, capabilities and choice (Friedman and Friedman 1962, 1980; Peters 1999; Scott 2000; Thirlwall 2003). These dominants theories of today have been challenged by alternative development thinking (Korten 1984; Sen 1985; Friedman 1992; Korten 1992; Sen and Nussbaum 1993; Gaonkar 2001; Sen 2004), focusing more on political participation, empowerment, post-modernity, diversity and priority to the

local arena and people's capabilities. Maybe the only field of agreement, even not exactly among all, is that development aims to tackle poverty, its roots and its effects.

The important connection is about the role of youth for development. Historically placed as a target group to be developed (youth development), the youth is here analysed as a means to recover development, especially because of its transitory condition, as explained before. Next chapter will introduce a case-study about the RRS, digging into its nuances, contradictions, composition, practices and political aspirations of some of its crucial youth-led members; this will be constantly contrasted with chapter 2, checking how close or far the case and the theories are from each other.

3. The RRS, a Youth-Led Network

3.1. Background and Philosophy

At a first glance, the RRS does not reveal any youthful characteristic in it, despite the fact that it is the direct result of the agglutination of forces among youth-led actors from the periphery of Recife. They define themselves (RRS 2005) as an affective and solidary space of provocative dialogue for the raising of new community practices, being an autonomous and informal network, constituted by cooperated individuals and collectives who search for social transformation through the logic of solidarity among themselves and resistance against external forces. Among other things, the RRS proposes community liberation as philosophy and practice, through more equalitarian and solidary labour (and social) relations. Focusing on the communities of its members, in August 2006 there were a total of 51 neighbourhoods involved within the Metropolitan Area of Recife (Interview 2006i).

The perceived average-age within the network is around 25-26 years of age, as they say it, and as I could see myself (Interview 2006f), raging from about 16 to about 35. Apart of the age factor, just some of them explicitly recognise themselves as young people or as youth-led organisations, an interesting fact related to an unequal power relation between the youth and other social actors. As those concerned say, they do not want to be associated with the image of being an aged target group that may represent a threat to society, or that may be in constant risk due to its economical or social conditions, or that are only specific consumers for the market (Interview 2006b, 2006c); an initial point of resistance against the perceived way that political, social and economic actors treat the youth. Yet, another problematic factor reported refer to the fact that there is no consensus about defining youth; therefore, members of the youth-led organisations within RRS complained that whenever they start talking about youth, they "lose a considerable time trying to unnecessarily define it, while the real political agenda of their interest gets blurred" (Interview 2006c). As a consequence, they avoid entering in discussions about youth.

The rationale behind the network is based on resistance and fight against inequality and its external source forces. Deliberately, it opposes the neo-liberal agenda and empowers people in their own communities. One of the most important

facts is to guarantee the local control of their means of subsistence, through networks of self-help and social economy. Besides, its three main objectives are: to network (articulation where everyone is an independent and solidary cell); to resist (through democratisation of their means of production and diffusion of local information, culture, education and work); and solidarity (to give and to receive in the benefit of all). Additionally, the guiding principals the Network are: liberty, self-reliance, solidarity, collective action, honesty, equality and affectivity. On its practice, the network is gathering once a week to plan its actions. It divides its practice in three main pillars: action (five radio programs, a monthly graffiti collective action, an artistic-solidary space, some fanzines and magazine, awareness campaigns, and some economical production unities¹); structure (a music recording studio, an independent musical seal, fair-trade shops, t-shirts production, a graphical centre, a community school); and an ethical internal management (empowerment of the members and self-reliance, among others) (RRS 2005; Cordeiro 2006a). Altogether, they clearly reflect the theoretical background of the people-centred approach for development (Korten 1984; Friedman 1992; Korten 1992).

Galo de Souza, founding member of the network, says: "we need to produce solutions that bring the oppressed ones to be cooperative of their own liberation; we need to produce food, information, clothes, music, films, ideas and community ideals, reflecting ourselves. The community must consume what is produced there, what is expressed, felt and thought to its liberation" (Souza, 2005:2). He refers to "community liberation" (Souza 2005; Interview 2006i) and to new forms of local political-economic systems, combined with their own local culture and self-awareness.

In sum, this is an example of youth-led initiative which is not seeking to address youth issues, but their community's developmental issues, grounded in grassroots organisations and people that are trying to break on through the great inequality gap of Brazilian cities. For them, the youth (or themselves) is clearly not the target of development; instead, it is its source of action. One of the RRS' founders, Elaine Bonfim, stated clearly to me: "youth never was an issue of mine, was it yours?" (Interview 2006h). This statement also makes clear that the political attitude of organised sectors of the youth is not necessarily dealing with youth issues; moreover, it opens space for a new realisation: youth politics, a term I will

¹ Like: swelling, recording, medical herbs.

refer again to in section 3.3 of this chapter, after a discussion about the constituency of the RRS network.

3.2. Constituency and Functioning

Constituted in January 2005, the first cells of the network were some hip-hop crews that years before had added a fifth element to the well known four elements of hip-hop², the politization. Adding political content and attitude to the other four elements added quality to their work, and direct consequence was that rapidly those groups got apart of the hip-hop identification and started to create a new image and new links, with other politicised actors, not necessarily within the hip-hop movement. One year and a half after its creation, the main actors of the network were approximately 250 individual and around 60 grassroots organisations affiliated. In general, these organisations are basically youth-led, informal and with strong community ties.

The membership status of the network is similar to the membership type of those member organisations. Everyone and any organisation that seek more autonomy, more care to their home communities, and share the political feeling of resistance against external pressures are welcome to join, in a very informal way. There is no other criterion, but I must highlight the importance of the time passing factor. Once a week they hold an open meeting aiming to discuss and to plan the network's activities and positions. Along the time, some organisations and individuals come, go and do not come back at all. The persistence and interest in actively participate in the weekly meetings, and, most importantly, in the commonly agreed activities is the main factor that lastly defines the membership position within the network. The same was true for all interviewed youth-led organisations, revealing that a common membership characteristic of them was naturally assimilated in the network itself. This makes at the same time difficult and easy the tracking of the current members; difficult because the number is constantly floating, and easy because through relationships of trust and friendship (social capital) they usually know very well one another, notwithstanding the total number of members. Being young is not a pre-requisite, but it happens to be that the outstanding majority of the members are young people and youth-led organisations. As the age factor is not a criterion for checking in, it is also not for

² The four classical elements of hip-hop are: break (the dance style), graffiti (the artistic drawing), DJ (the music mixing component), and poetry (the rhyme and the lyrics composition).

checking out; what provokes youth-led organisations to track different paths. In some, older members naturally leave the organisation and it maintains its youth-led characteristic along the time. In others, older members resist within the organisation, and therefore the organisation changes, being youth-led only in its origin, and being able to open more efficient intergenerational dialogues (if they want to). Alternatively, others can just die out; with older members leaving and no renew, they simple cease to exist. Membership is therefore a natural and spontaneous process of self-identification with the network philosophy and commitment with the collective agreements.

Such membership logic goes off a series of consequences, like the internal management arrangement. A horizontal structure was built upon the network, with no general coordinator to exercise the managerial power, but with a built space of coordination: the general weekly meeting. These meetings, where all are invited, are the only space where decisions can be taken, all collectively. No one has the right to represent the network alone, unless assigned in such meeting, but theoretically all members are eligible, especially the ones in the network for a longer time and with a strong trust built with the collective. In each meeting someone is elected to make the minutes and some experienced member to facilitate it. In theory, everyone can suggest any topic to the agenda, but the level of importance of each topic is usually lifted or decreased accordingly to the standpoints of those members who achieved higher levels of trust within the network. Trust is hence a source of internal power and leadership, including for conscious or unconscious agenda setting. However, leadership seems to be still a mythic word within the network, because it brings with it a heritage of vertical relations of power. As a consequence, risks may emerge: on the one hand, when the actual leaders are not fully aware of their power and leadership, for self-denying them; or on the other hand, when the majority are not aware of the leadership exercised by some, due to the blind belief on the internal sacred horizontality. A similar reality happens for the youth-led organisations interviewed, once those who have experienced centralised coordination reported they had passed through strong internal conflicts that weakened the trust level within the organisation (Interview 2006c, 2006e).

The same internal power issue makes the network a bit closed into its internal relationships of trust and friendship, which is good for strengthening purposes, but bad for influencing other actors in society. In addition, this effect directly influences the network accountability and partnering. The effect over its

accountability seems to be quite positive and welcomed, once it makes the accountability flow more lateral wards (among those in the relationship of trust and friendship), than upwards (towards external actors) or downwards (towards neighbourhoods and communities). This reflects a quite unique situation, very different of other social actors in society; nevertheless, it is important to say that the mechanisms for accountability are essentially informal instruments, like: oral reports through the weekly meetings; the meeting's minutes; and, most importantly, collective actions in the neighbourhoods, where the members of the network show their commitment one to another in practice and in interaction with their own communities. Ironically, such accountability system differs of the one experienced by the affiliated youth-led organisations. These tend to be more accountable both upwards and downwards, including being accountable to the RRS itself as well, or not being accountable to anyone at all, depending of their size, life time and kinds of partnership being established. While in the network the pressure for accountability comes from within, in the youth-led organisations, when it exists, it seems to come from outside.

In the historicity of the interviewed youth-led actors, a pattern of problematic relationship with other social actors is present. NGOs, for instance, are sarcastically mentioned because they only pay attention to children and adolescent rights, and rarely distinguish them from youth agency: "to get involved with NGOs, I needed to be a child that does not know how to do things properly, otherwise they lack interest on me" (Interview 2006b). Another illustration still has to do with a certain lack of trust towards youth-led organisations, in terms of [lack of] capabilities and experience to run serious and professional initiatives. In contradiction, this problem seems to be helping youth-led actors to build up more autonomy and more confidence among themselves; however, a bad detail is that this is happening apart, and in spite of the rest of society, missing the element of intergenerational dialogue. As a result youth-led actors tend to basically create partnerships among themselves. Whenever there are doors opened, attempts of partnership are still tried; however, there seems to be some fatigue and tiredness from the youth side in pursuing it. As a reflex, the RRS is an outcome of an intergenerational partnership among organised sectors of the youth in Recife, but adopting the strategy of not defining themselves as youth anymore.

With such membership, management, leadership, accountability and partnership style, sustainability comes into questioning. With a style that would represent a suicide for most of other kinds of civil society organisations, youth-led

organisations are more challenged by internal political sustainability than by economical sustainability; they are used to the absence of money, and that became no impeditive for their work as an organisation. The RRS and its organisations grew up managing very short resources and almost no money at all; most of them being those that they could offer themselves, such like work, creativity, commitment, time, and so on. Whatever economical resources they achieved, they share it with all others. The network itself and part of its organisations (Interview 2006f, 2006c, 2006b) also count to structural and strengthening support of an umbrella youth-led organisation, which is also part of the network. On the other hand, its political internal sustainability is challenged by all taboos in relation to leadership, horizontality and collective action.

Another threatening factor is the level of economic sustainability of its members, as individuals. Together with the internal political stability, this is the main factor may lead the members to abandon the organisations and the network. In addition, the vast majority of them work in the informal sector of the economy, with jobs and duties that many times are in direct contradiction to the network's philosophy and ideals. As a response to that, the RRS has been creating autonomous production unities in consonance with the network principals, aiming to extend it to all neighbourhoods where its members live, as part of its political agenda.

3.3. Political Agenda and (Re)Action

The strategy of this youth-led movement is multifaceted, once each youth-led organisation seeks to achieve different goals within different ambits (see annex A); however, a strong complementary link is perceived. Such complementarities in diversity made than realise that solidarity and cooperation among themselves were essential factor to amplify each ones agenda, as well as create a complementary common political agenda among them. It is incredible how this common agenda focuses on power issues, generally throughout society. The foremost issues in this shared agenda are: community liberation; local economical autonomy; information as a source of awareness. It gives an amplified meaning for political action. Being political does not mean voting, or otherwise dealing with governmental issues or public policy making; otherwise, in this case it has to do with being an active member in your local community, fighting for its economical and political autonomy and self-sustainability. This is the message behind all the youth action in this case.

Community liberation (Souza 2005) is an important instrument to make people back to their origins, in collectiveness, in times of extreme individuality and competitiveness. As said before, it is in the local level that people are born, live and die; thus, we should not only act locally, but also think locally. Here it is the famous popular cliché of “think globally and act locally” meets some opposition; what the RRS suggests is to both think and act locally. Nonetheless, due to the constant problematic power relation present in this case, my sense suggests me to highlight that power relations need to be changed, and for that there should be space for thinking locally (priority to local needs and logics), but acting globally (to challenge power structures in society). Inclusion here gains a new approach as well: they do not want to be included in the social/political/economical system the way it is today; otherwise, they want the system to be flexible enough to assume all the diversity there is in society, empowering these communities.

Local economical autonomy is not only a plead for more local economic ownership and decision making, but an actual attempt to build new productive institutions that can produce all that a community may need to consume. Indeed a difficult task, also because these communities are based in a very dense urban area, surrounded by all attractiveness of global capitalism and consumerism. Moreover, they meet the same strong difficulties faced by all attempts of social economy models (like LETS, solidary economy and cooperatives): the fierce competition with the already established capitalist economy.

Information as a source of awareness closes the circle of this common agenda, as a quest to raise more awareness, and not only educational levels, among all who live in their communities. The most important aspect here is the defence for right to communicate; not only to receive qualitative information, but the right to broadcast and publish the community’s own contents. A campaign was held along the beginning of 2006 about the Brazilian digital TV standard that will be discussed more on chapter three.

Implementing such political agenda as a network, while taking into account the diverse but complementary political agenda of each member, and even so having some impact in society, is the crucial point to analyse the capacity of influence of this youth-led movement. To implement it, the network has agreed in some lines of action: a monthly community collective action for raising awareness, solidarity and liberty, economical production nuclei for income generation and local autonomy (sewing, t-shirts, cultural products, food, natural people’s knowledge

medicines and so on, all produced by the communities themselves and sold at the network's fair-trade own shops), and centres of local information spreading, producing alternative newspapers, songs, radio programs, communication campaigns, and so forth. Additionally, an internal horizontal management is used, also as a way to implement its political agenda of more equal relationships among all. The monthly community collective action is maybe the most visible and important action, together with the production nuclei for self-sustainability.

These actions are basically turned to within the communities of the network's members, with little interaction with the outside world. They help the RRS to influence the involved communities, but it makes difficult to influence with other institutions. Such outside interaction happens when, for instance, external actors look for the network for whatever reason, there seems to be some climate of doubt, until the actor proves his/her/its alignment with the values and the political agenda of the network; conversely, the network seeks to provoke the outside society through organised manifests and campaigns against consumerism, multinationals or neo-liberal government policies. RRS deliberately does not seek to fundraise (that would generate lack of autonomy and independence); they neither establish outside partnerships nor advertise their actions in the big commercial media. These are acts of resistance, intended to make other social actors to look for them, instead of the other way around. It seems that the solidarity aspect of RRS is aimed for within the network, while the resistance component is reserved for those outsider power structures. The RRS acts and reacts according to the membership or outsider relationship one establishes with it. The same seems to be true to the youth-led member organisations and their own actions and impact in society (see Annex B).

In terms of impact, RRS is achieving a lot with the communities where they focus their actions. The growing number of adherent communities and members represent an evidence of such internal impact. However, influencing the world outside the network still appears to be a weak point, once they are reacting more than acting towards external social actors.

This greater inwards and lesser outwards impact is also observed in a network analysis of the supporters and spoilers of network activities. When asked about who is helping and who is spoiling their work, simply all interviewees stated that their supporters are located in a realm of other youth-led actors (mainly from within the network, but in some cases also from outside) and co-related social

movements (Interview 2006f, 2006e, 2006c, 2006d, 2006b). Only one group stated that the communities themselves are part of its supporter group (Interview 2006b); again, another evidence that they are more accountable lateral-wards than downwards, and definitely not upwards. Plus, only one group reported to see as supporters a specific Lula's government policy, *Pontos de Cultura* (Interview 2006c). Yet again, only one group says to be supported by some individuals from within the local government structure, giving information and sometimes inviting to participated in cultural activates, and nothing further (Interview 2006b).

On the other hand, two main actors were acclaimed by all respondents as the main spoiler of their work, the big corporate media and the current political system in Brazil (Interview 2006f, 2006e, 2006c, 2006d, 2006b). The media is constantly said to be invading their homes and life with prejudicial propaganda and low qualitative content, stimulating consumerism and alienation among people in the communities they work with. The political system is said to be distrusted, specifically political parties and the government institutions. They say political parties are only interested in governmental power and not actually interested in taking care of the people or implementing clear political agendas and programs; thus, they see them as corrupted institutions occupied by self-interested and individualist people. Conversely, government institutions are also seen as corrupted and submerged into a sea of corruption. Some of them say that once you get involved with them from within, you soon corrupt yourself, and they cite as the sad example concerning the Lula's government with PT party. These are deeds appointed as reason to create a parallel political activism, within youth-led organisations and with their own communities, outside the parties and the government, and not competing for governmental power. In the national Brazilian elections in October 2006, these same organisations were supporting or campaigning for people to vote null, to show a protest of resistance against the system. This is understandable, but very tricky; acting as such, they leave the political system alone for those corrupted one, just like with such kind of campaign, they incentive politicised people to vote null, while others less politicised will continue to vote accordingly the mass media scenario.

Additionally and very interestingly, two groups point to youth branches of left-wing political parties as spoiling their work, especially during street public manifestations, where they invade them with their flags shouting loudly the same old manifestos of ever, with no renew or dialogue with the independent autonomous youth-led organisations and movements (Interview 2006e, 2006d).

Furthermore, two report to the police as a great spoiler of their public acts (Interview 2006e, 2006d), while only one group says that the lack of money spoils its work (Interview 2006c), all others, even having short or no money at all, just do not bring attention to that.

These answers represent a scenario where RRS and its members want to change society from within but are reluctant to initiate a dialogue with the world outside their boundaries. Nevertheless, an interaction is happening, but mostly led by non-youth-led sectors of society. Two examples of initiatives led by members of the RRS towards society were the Digital TV Campaign towards the government and the big media, and the null vote discussion, aiming the general Brazilian elections in 2006. These campaigns and those non-youth actors are more discussed in the next chapter, where we also draw attention to some of the finding from this second group, and its relationship towards the youth in society.

4. Youth and society: who is setting the agenda?

Two non-youth-led actors were highlighted as problematic towards the youth, accordingly to all interviews with youth-led actors: the political system (parties and governments) and the big media. As a consequence, this chapter will dig deeper into the relationship these key actors maintain with the RRS. Some extra interviews and key document analyses are the source references of this chapter.

4.1. The Political System (Parties and Government)

As a background, in 1990 the pro-youth movement in Brazil achieved a great conquest, when the child's and adolescent's statute (ECA) was approved by the Brazilian parliament. That was the first set of laws dealing specifically with young people's rights. Throughout the 1990s, many non-youth-led NGOs were set in Brazil to implement the ECA. Youth, in Brazil, was then associated with, and restricted to, children and adolescents from birth to seventeen years of age, in a right based approach only. Most recently, after Lula/PT was elected in 2002, a national youth council was created, and there has been a dialogue with the government and the parliament to elaborate both a national youth plan and a youth's statute, to expand public policies and rights beyond the ECA's age constraints. Like in the 1990s, this current discussion is happening again under a right based approach based on youth protagonism, while it seems that more organised youth segments, like the RRS, are seeking for more agency based approaches instead.

Before Lula's government, the RRS was not yet formed, but most of its members already existed in activist groups. At that time, and for the group, the main enemy was clearly the neoliberal rightwing politics, mostly represented by the big corporations, the big media and the national government led by PSDB and President Fernando Henrique Cardoso. In the last elections for president, in 2002, most of these activists and youth-led organisations were actively campaigning for Lula's election, and the victory was happily achieved. This campaign was marked by a dispute against hope and fear: Lula's PT represented hope, once its program was aiming to promote equality and combat poverty, while José Serra's PSDB represented fear, once its program was based in combating violence and unemployment, common fears among Brazilians. The same happened two years

before it, during the 2000 municipal elections, where the same youth actors were campaigning to elect the PT candidate for mayor in Recife, Mr. João Paulo Lima e Silva (like Lula, he is a former unionist); again successfully, once he was elected in 2000 in a tight dispute in the second round of the municipal elections. In 2004, João Paulo was the first re-elected mayor in the history of Recife, now at once in the first round of the poll for the term 2005-2008. In spite of this, this re-election counted only to a faint support from the independent youth-led movement.

It seems that the lack of substantial and structural change, as felt by members of this movement, contributed, in early 2005, to the creation of RRS as a strategy to free their own communities from their holding ties, apart of seeking more endogenous development. Interestingly, now the enemy had changed: while before the enemy was the old rightwing in charge of the big corporations, the big media and the government; now, it seems to be, on the one hand the same rightwing and their corporations and media, and on the other hand the governments and political parties of the country, today led by leftwing sectors, especially former unionists.

After six years of PT in the local government in Recife and four years of PT in the national government in Brazil – full of corruption scandals – most of the RRS members see no alternative anymore among politicians. Either from the left, centre or the right, for them politicians are all corrupted by the political system (Interview 2006f). Even the youth branches of political parties are added in the list of corrupted institutions, especially the ones from leftwing parties; in the last chapter they were cited among the main spoilers of the RRS member's political agenda. Within this scenario, it is understandable the attitude to resist to whatever external power structures there are in the society outside the network; instead of defending a right or leftwing politics, the RRS seems to be defending a *selfwing* politics inwards their member's communities, in internal relationships of solidarity.

In relation to the relationship of the leftwing governments towards the youth during these last years, we can see that they are still pretty conservative, placing youth only in a right based approach, opening space for youth participation mainly in youth-related issues. Illustrations can be raised from both Recife's municipality and the national government.

Recife's Municipality is run by Mayor João Paulo of PT since January 2001; currently in his second turn as mayor, João Paulo got a strong support from youth-

led actors in Recife during his first election campaign in 2000 and still some support for his re-election campaign in 2004. During his first term in office, the main achievement was to implement the Participatory Budgeting in the city. Beyond a needs based approach, he also created a specific participatory budget for the youth, as a right youth should have to decide about project toward its category. The RRS's members actively participated in this invited space of participation, but after a while they reported that this space was not working properly. Among the reasons, the budget approved in plenary was released with a great delay or was not released at all. Furthermore, the priorities set in the plenary were not fully respected during the execution of the youth's budget. In addition, I could see myself, during a youth's participatory budget plenary in Recife, in early 2005, that the municipality was trying to get youth participation in a very artificial way, bringing many busses full of students from their classes, with the teachers, without knowing exactly what was happening, just attracted by the cultural shows there were in the program of the plenary and the free food offered by the organisers. Unfortunately, those students composed the majority of the votes, making the process to lack quality and politization. Indeed, the youth participatory budget in Recife has become a big party over the time, with little empowering effect.

During Lula's first government (2003-2006) the youth got some attention, differently of previous governments. As said before, it was not before 1990 that Brazilian National Congress approved the child's and adolescent's statute (the ECA), setting bills of rights for those between birth and 17 years of age. However, it took longer for the government to open its eyes for segments of youth over 18. Lula's first government created three initiatives to benefit the youth: the youth plan ProJovem, a Youth National Secretary and the Youth National Council (PJ 2004; PR 2005; Silva et al. 2006); together, they formed a set of national public policies towards the youth beyond the ECA, but still seeing youth only as a target group in society. Many attempts of participation were done by youth-led actors, but participation only took place in invited spaces open by the government. As a consequence, only experts about youth or selected young leaders interested in youth policies could participate in the process, what contributed to great part of the youth-led actors to loose interest on it.

Before Lula's second term in office (2007-2010), his government keeps talking about youth policies only, and not considering youth politics. As illustration, the official PT's platform (PT 2006a) for its second term mandate says that "the Lula Administration, acknowledging youths as subjects of rights, will assure the

continuity of policies which have granted them access to quality education at all levels, to culture, to sports, to leisure and to decent jobs" (ibid.:7), but no realisation about the importance of youth politics. Furthermore, the specific proposals in the platform towards the youth are: "strengthen the National Youth Department, implementing the National System for Youth Policies; Broaden and consolidate youth policies, integrating actions; Strengthen the PROUNI, secondary-level schooling and vocational programs for the youth; Broaden the focus on juvenile care in the Single System of Health; Increase, in partnership with states and municipalities, the chain of Culture Spots and Casa Brasil in areas lacking culture and digital inclusion public facilities - this partnership is to be extended to sports and leisure amenities" (ibid.:25). These are all great steps indeed for a country that did not have youth policies at all; however, it is still lacking leverage from youth-led actors to add policies that could actually empower them in society, beyond youth policies.

This behaviour has been in consonance with the approach of international institutions towards the youth, like the WB (WB 2006) and the UN (UN 2005a, 2005b). They only consider youth policies and youth rights, but not youth's own political agenda and interests. Moreover, they privilege the participation of specialists on youth, rather than political young activists. Furthermore, they usually open their own controlled spaces for "youth participation", inviting whoever they want or "are able to", as it was mentioned in a World Bank meeting (Interview 2006j) in Brussels to launch its World Development Report 2007, all focused on youth issues for development. Generally, this picture shows clearly that it is up to the youth to empower itself, and not to governments or international organisations. On the contrary, youth participation as implemented by these actors seems to be closer to forms of control rather than decision making empowerment.

Youth branches of political parties could represent a means of independent youth-led actors, such as the RRS, to voice their agenda towards society. However, a clear distance is observed. On the one hand, youth sectors of political parties are reproducing a lot of the misbehaviours of adult politicians (low effectiveness, cooptation, corruption), as stated by RRS members (Interview 2006i, 2006e, 2006d). On the other hand, attempts of dialogue were reported (Interview 2006i, 2006e), but with some resistance from RRS members, due to some fears of cooptation or of losing community support.

It looks like a dead-end trap, once that more organised youth-led actors, like the RRS, complain about their relationship with the political system and, on the other hand, they are not willing to dispute with the actors that today dominate this system, in order to change it. As a consequence, higher levels of political influence of RRS seem to be restricted to the political attitude of the communities they work with.

4.2. The Big Media

The big media is seen as a great constraint to the RRS and its affiliated members. It is said to represent the interests of the big companies and to bring the consumerism culture to communities that do not own the basic means of subsistence. What does the big-media think about that, and about the youth in society? I had talks with Rede Globo Nordeste, the Recife's branch of the biggest TV channel over Brazil (see table 3), Rede Globo, to find it out.

Table 3: Open TV channel's penetration in Brazil (Brittos 2003)

TV Channel	Number of branches in the country	Number of cities attended in the country	Presence in households with TV set
Globo	113	5.447	99,86%
SBT	92	4.907	97,18%
Record	62	2.320	76,67%
Bandeirantes	42	3.340	87,13%
Rede TV!	25	3.443	79,71%
CNT	18	240	36,67%
TOTAL	352	5.507	100%

Note 1: According to the official census made in 2000, the total number of cities in Brazil was 5.507; in addition, the percentage of people leaving in domiciles equipped with at least one TV set in Brazil was 86,02% and rising, while in Recife it was 95,26%, also increasing (FJP 2003).

Note 2: The 100% presence in households with TV set means that 100% of these domiciles can capture at least one or more signals of the listed TV channels.

It is undeniable the influence Rede Globo exercise over the public opinion in Brazil, especially because its peaks of audience happen during its news programs. Even having its average audience decreasing (see table 4) in Brazil during the last decade, Rede Globo is still, by far, the most watched TV channel in Brazil (Brittos 2003). And it is not only proud, but also aware of that; in a recent research³, made by the company itself in 2004 (Interview 2006k), it was revealed that Rede Globo is the only source of information for over the half of all Brazilians. This deed is very

³ I did not have the opportunity to see research paper, but it was reported by the interviewee.

significant for the company and it was said to be a source of caution and responsibility for the content editor's work in relation to its audience.

Table 4: Average audience of TV channels in Brazil (Brittos 2003)

TV Channel	Average Audience in 1994	Average Audience in 1997
Globo	63%	53%
SBT	18%	18%
Bandeirantes	5%	5%
Record	2%	5%
Rede TV! (in 1994 as Manchete)	2%	5%
Others (including paid TV)	10%	15%
TOTAL	100%	100%

From Globo's perspective, its relation with the youth takes shape within the educational component of the TV, where educational contents are included in those programs more watched by youngsters. Yet, the TV's web-based media is basically accessed by young viewers (Interview 2006k). There is hence a mix between relating with the youth as both content receivers and as viewers, or consumers. The interviewee stresses that the company does not clearly defines what youth could imply, but legally it takes into account the 18 years old limit defined by the Brazilian laws. Besides, and journalistically talking, he feels there is an informal common perception among his colleagues that tend to consider everyone under 30 as young. Personally, he states that being young is something that in practice surpasses a simplistic age based definition.

In relation to the youth influencing the content of the TV and generating news, the interviewee says that the company gives no privilege to the youth specifically, and that it is treated like any other actor in society. What matters to Globo's content editors is the journalistic fact behind the deed. If youth is bringing about a journalistic fact, it will have more chances to influence the content; otherwise, it is not just because one is young that she/he will make the TV broadcast some news. On the other hand, the role of youth as new consumers also represents another locus of interest for the company, once it is a private media corporation. The interviewee reported a blurred borderline between young people as journalistic fact and consumers, saying that as media professionals, they are not always aware of it, due to the competitiveness of the market.

Among the factors that make Globo to pay attention to the actions organised by the youth-led actors in society, two are worthy to discuss: the level of organisation, and the level of politicisation of the youth. On the one hand, the more

organised the youth is the easier it is to generate a journalistic fact for Globo (Interview 2006k); a statement that has to do with two other factors that journalists are always looking for: clarity of the content and representativeness within a clear category. On the other hand, the politicisation of the youth is a problem for Globo, especially in electoral years like 2006 (Interview 2006k); whenever the youth takes sides in a political debate, getting closer to whatever party or ideology, it loses impartiality. As a consequence, this is seen as a negative conditionality to influence Globo's journalistic agenda. One of the reasons for that behaviour lies on the fact that Globo is always accused in Brazil for influencing the political opinion of its viewers accordingly to its own political interests as the leading company in the Brazilian communication market; besides the company is very much aware of that, it is trying to change this perception among its public through avoiding to broadcast too politicised opinions. When asked about the last journalistic facts youth had generated the interviewee could not remember any, but only facts generated by non-youth led organisations aiming to reach the youth.

Nevertheless, it is not as journalistic facts that the youth is trying to influence the big media agenda, but in truth, the intent is much deeper, and refers to the macro political agenda and behaviour of these big media corporations towards the city and the country. Youth-led actors in Recife have talks about the people's right to communicate and to broadcast, and not only to gain more space in the contents broadcasted by others. Here, the dichotomy of being a protagonist in someone else's script or being the author/director of the play comes clearly into debate, in a struggle for empowerment, and not necessarily for invited participation⁴.

A case in point was the 2006 debate about the digital TV standard in Brazil, in which RRS members engaged deeply. The communication system in Brazil is still analogical and until September 2006 there were governmental discussions to migrate towards a digital system. Four digital standards were under discussion: the North-American, European and Japanese, apart from the possibility of creating a Brazilian standard, with national technology and ownership. The RRS soon entered in this national discussion, foreseeing the possibility of democratising the means of mass communication in Brazil. The RRS members started a campaign in favour of a

⁴ For youth-led actors, there is some discrimination behind these well intentioned propositions. It is not hard to hear from youth-led actors in Recife that they do not want to be protagonists acting accordingly to a script written by someone else; otherwise they want to be the authors/directors themselves. In Brazil, young people are being invited to participate and to act as protagonists in issues they have not written; therefore, the youth is still not setting the agenda.

Brazilian standard that could multiply the number of open channels currently available in the country. More specifically, they were aiming in the proliferation of community based channels, to produce and broadcast their own contents. The lobbying processes taking place behind the governmental discussion was basically a dispute of influence between two market actors: the current TV channels and the telecommunication companies in charge of the internet, telephone and mobile communication industry in Brazil. The first group put pressure in the Ministry of Communication in favour of the Japanese system, the one that offers the better image quality and the lesser possibility of TV channel expansion. In opposition, the second group was lobbying for the European system, the one that opens up the possibility to multiply the number of TV channels, due to their interest to invest in a new field. Naturally, the current TV channels did not want the European system to avoid extra competition in their market.

The RRS members, through an action carried out by *Ventilador Cultural*, created political poem to denounce this commercial dispute and the passive attitude of the Ministry of Communication, Mr. Hélio Costa, to put such strategic area of interest for sale in the market, by accepting the pressures of these actors (Rabelo 2006). A political fact was created by *Ventilador Cultural* after it managed to deliver the poem to the Ministry of Culture, Mr. Gilberto Gil, through an underground network of friends that reached an employee of him, at his home in Brasília. Mr. Gilberto Gil unexpectedly read the poem during a public ceremony at UFRJ, generating a political fact that could have changed the will of the discussion, if there was more pressure from all concerned social movements towards the government (Rodrigues and Marques 2006; Zimmermann 2006). In the end the Japanese standard was officially elected by the Ministry of Communication, leaving the youth-led actors' attempt apart of this market dispute. The interview with the Globo's representative stressed the same, that this dispute was merely a commercial dispute, where Globo took a clear side in favour of the Japanese standard to defend its own interests, once it is a private company playing in the market, and if it does not protect its interests, its profit would be at risk (Interview 2006k). Furthermore, the interviewee did not mention anything that could suggest some knowledge about the RRS attempt to influence the government decision.

This case shows some creativeness and potentiality of the RRS on its attempt to influence society; however, it also shows its lack of substantial influence over macro structures of power. In parallel, more effective efforts within microstructures (communities) are being carried out, aiming the strengthening of

the communication capabilities of the network (*cf.* Chapter 3), with higher levels of impact.

In sum, one can see that non-youth-led actors are setting more the agenda, in the context of these intergenerational relationships. It may sound obvious to realise, but non-youth-led actors seem not to feel it in full, due to their more comfortable position. Youth-led actors, in contrast, are the ones that feel it the most. While the consequences of this situation are analysed in the next chapter, the reasons why cannot be attributed to the political system and the big media alone, but also to the youth-led actors themselves, once they are the most interested in pursuing more real empowerment for their political agenda towards society.

5. Uncovering Intergenerational Relationships

5.1. *Traces of Discrimination and Tiredness*

During this research, traces of unintended discrimination against the youth were revealed in intergenerational relationships, due to unequal power relations. Unbalanced power relations can be found in many circumstances: in the family (where parents are in command), in the market (where youngsters are labelled as inexperienced and therefore receive lower incomes), in relation to the state (where there are limits for youth to run as candidates in elections, and where youth tend to be seen only as target of public policies, not actors), and in civil society (also where the youth is mostly perceived as target groups rather than civil actors).

Certainly, it is not only because one is young that this unequal power relation comes into being. The state of being young is just one among many other disempowering factors in the Brazilian society of today. Other factors are gender, race, poverty, educational level, and even origin. The new here is to realise that being young is one of these factors, as it is rarely considered as such by the adult world. It becomes clear in this research in two aspects: the chats, talks and interviews I had with members of RRS, and not less importantly, my own young activist life in the last decade, as member of at least three youth-led organisations and many youth-led networks and movements. In the Brazil of today, if you are poor, black, woman, uneducated, from northern regions of the country, and young: you are in a really bad disadvantage condition in comparison to other segments. For instance, even if one has the five first factors but is an adult, this one will be more accepted in civil society circles as an actor able to exercise his/her agency to exercise influence in society. A youngster will probably be treated still as in risk and hence subject of rights and protection, but not of agency. Among other factors, this is due to the fact youth-led actors did not yet confront in full such form of discrimination.

Michel Foucault has said already, that power is everywhere and is very subliminal. His contributions are still important to the rise of feminist movements and women-led movements. The described factors contribute for many of us to be born in prisons, without the necessary knowledge to escape from it (Foucault 1969, 1975, 1976), being forms of control and punishment very much experienced by

young people. However, agency seems to be the way out of such prisons, thus the need for youth agency to be more recognised and practiced.

Seven interviews with youth actors, out of seven, revealed that the youth-led organisations within RRS do not receive money from other civil society actors; the only exception reported was about the umbrella organisation *Academia de Desenvolvimento Social*, also youth-led and member of the network. The support received by *Academia* comes basically from WKKF, an independent American foundation addressing youth empowerment as a condition for the development of Latin America (Tancredi 2005; WKKF 2005b; Thompson 2006b), and it has been used to strengthen the youth-led movement in Recife. Other chats, like two informal ones with Oxfam-GB in Recife (Interview 2006g) and Cordaid in The Hague (Interview 2006l) showed that WKKF is among the few donors that are trying to directly support youth-led organisations and movements. Oxfam-GB office in Brazil, based in Recife, and Cordaid's international headquarter in The Hague see youth as both an agents and issue; however they do not directly support youth-led organisations. Otherwise, they reach youth as targets indirectly, via other more established Brazilian recipient NGOs. As a natural reaction, the youth-led organisations with RRS are not seeking for external sources of money; instead, they are operating with their own limited resources, mostly their time, energy, creativeness and solidarity.

In addition, five out of seven interviews with youth actors (Interview 2006i, 2006f, 2006e, 2006d, 2006b) spontaneously reported that they are usually invited to participate in spaces open by external actors (*cf.* chapter 4), but basically to discuss youth issues, and not their own original political agenda (*cf.* chapter 3). As a consequence of such not inevitable connection, they are now avoiding participating in such invited spaces; therefore, they are opting to create their own spaces of empowerment, once power is usually taken or built, not gifted or shared. A similar contradiction between invited and created spaces of participation and empowerment (Sanchez 2006) is also observed (*cf.* section 5.2).

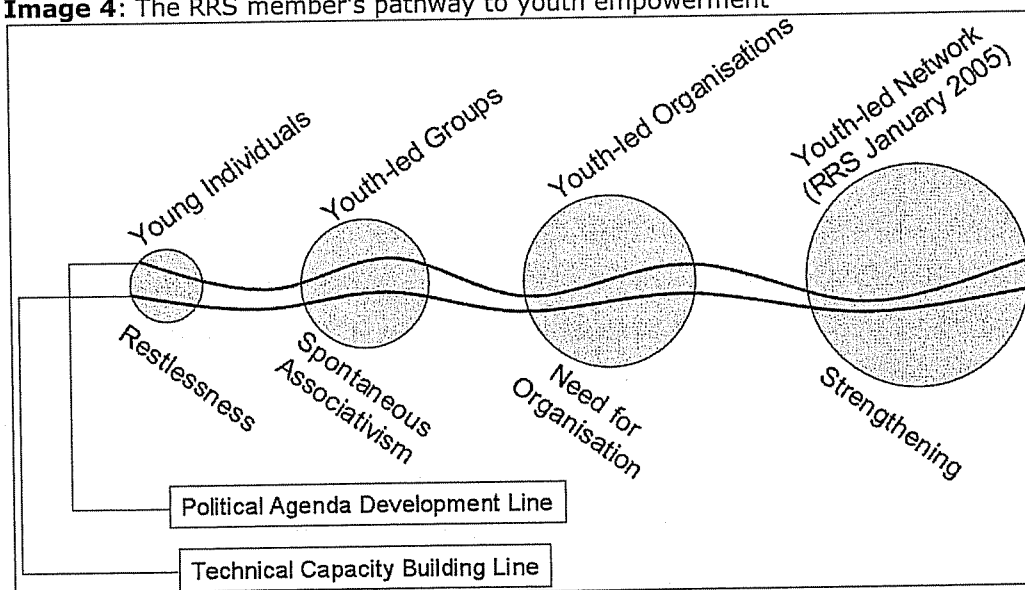
In sum, there is a need to firstly recognise that there is an unequal intergenerational relationship taking place in Recife; secondly, and not less importantly, that the condition of being young is becoming too much associated with being target groups for civil society and government actors in Brazil. As a consequence, there seem to be a risk that more and more youth actors, like those

within the RRS, will continue to avoid their youth condition, as a means for their own empowerment to address society.

5.2. Participation vs. Empowerment

This dichotomy is brought to illustrate the difference between the society's approaches towards the youth and the youth's approaches towards society. In Brazil, as mentioned in chapter two, youth protagonism and youth participation are the principal strategy used by non-youth-led civil society actors to implement their educative actions towards the youth. The youth-led actors within RRS are not willing to do that; neither they are focusing on being targeted by other actors or on discussing youth related issues only. Their concerns are in relation to the way society is structured, especially the communities and neighbourhoods they live in. During the talks it was clear that all youth actors interviewed prefer to create their own spaces of empowerment, being the RRS itself a direct result of this construction, rather than accepting external invitation to participate in spaces to discuss other one's agendas. For them, associativism was revealed as the main strategy to build up their empowerment; furthermore, this is the way they find to actively participate in society's life. Image 4 tries to exemplify the pathway the RRS has come through along the time, since even before its official creation in January 2005:

Image 4: The RRS member's pathway to youth empowerment



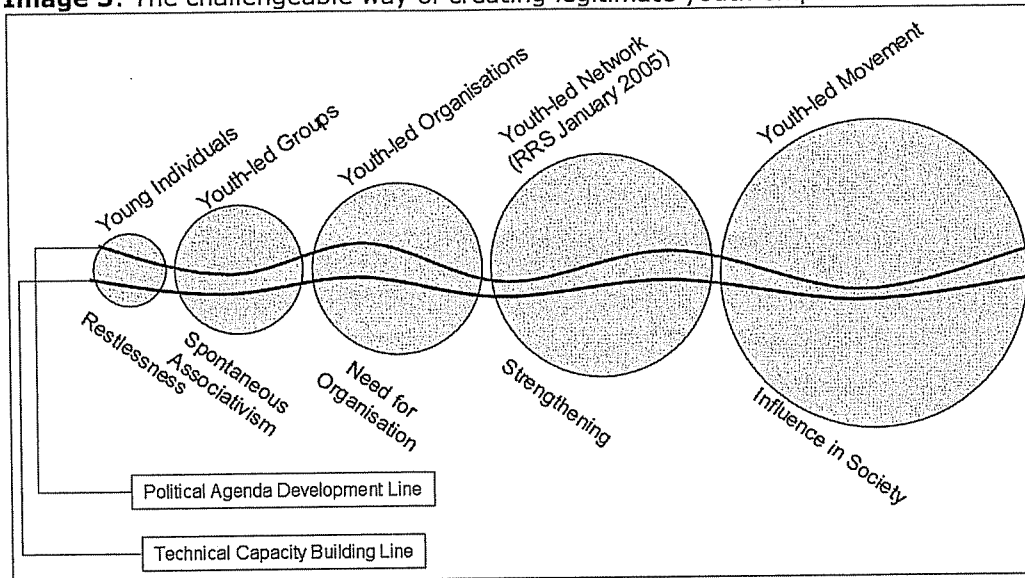
Notes: Author's creation. The political and technical lines are intentionally not parallel and not flat, because they are observed to be fluid processes, and not linear at all. Besides, the size of the circles represents the growing potentiality of legitimate empowerment within society, and not any scale of greatness.

Restlessness is the main characteristic demonstrated by many young individuals far before the creation of the initial cells of the RRS. The main source for such individual agitation lay especially on their indignation against the deprived social, economical and political situation of themselves, their families and neighbours. Naturally, it generates a strong impetus for doing something within those individuals, specifically against the abstract and constructed image of what for them represents the system behind the Brazilian social order: an apparent set of institutions and power holders that are able to take decision that affect their very lives, predominantly represented by big private companies and governments in general (Interview 2006f).

When they realise they are not alone, youth-led groups are created, above all spontaneously with no external actor facilitating the process (Interview 2006e, 2006c, 2006b). These groups are linked by friendship and/or identity ties, that when they achieve more clear objectives and proposals, in a seek for more organisation, they cross the blurred borderline into a youth-led organisation (Rocha 2006).

Networking was the following natural step, with other youth-led organisations working in very different subjects, but still with a complementary role to come together in more string ties of collective actions. It is important to mention that all this observed process is followed by two crosscutting processes, the development of their political agenda towards society and the strengthening of their technical capacity building to act upon society with effectiveness and concrete results. Nevertheless, even with a quite clear political agenda and technical capacity for action, the RRS is still focusing only to provoke change in their communities of origin, as a step for their own strengthening (Interview 2006i, 2006c); this constitutes a reason why they do not intend to be exposed to their outside world, even aware that the political, economical and social forces that spoils their work the most lay in that external world. It seems that there is a need for RRS to give another step, beyond network; perhaps, after this strengthening process comes to a certain limit, they will be forced to naturally become a movement, rather than a network. Here, they will be forced to act precisely in their perceived outside world, using their political agenda and technical skills to exercise influence over it, changing the sources of their experienced inequalities, and not only their effects within their own communities. Image 5 attempts to visually expose this challenge.

Image 5: The challengeable way of creating legitimate youth empowerment



Notes: Author's creation. The same notes for image 4 apply here.

This is how the youth in this case is pursuing its empowerment. In my view, a much more legitimate, effective and appropriated way of doing it, because its main source of action lays on the restlessness of young actors that use their agency to bring about renew to civil society as a whole; moreover, they are spontaneous processes that contribute to the political and technical development of all those involved, as a real exercise of citizenship and political attitude towards society. Furthermore, it is grounded in collective action and aims to social movement action, a needed force for the checks and balances between societies and governments. At last, but not at least, it represents the legitimate and empowered way that youth may participate in society, helping to break vicious problems circles that are lasting throughout generations in Latin America (Morán and Aldaz-Carroll 2001; Morán 2004), from the old and well known poverty and inequality gaps to the new phenomena of political apathy and disillusionment.

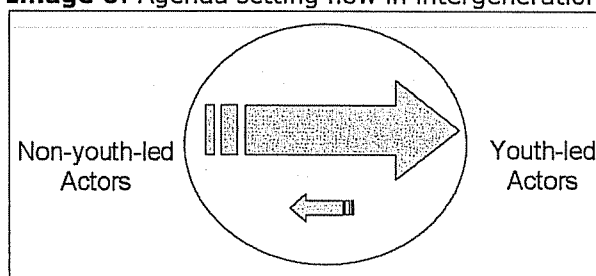
5.3. Youth Agency for Development

In this case-study, it becomes clear that segments of the youth, especially the more organised and politicised ones, are looking for fair societal development, and not only youth rights implementation. As a consequence, they need to address societal issues as a whole, in an intergenerational dialogue towards the sought long-term and sustainable development. This constitutes a need for a constant intergenerational dialogue; nevertheless, who is pushing such dialogue for development? As observed during this research, non-youth-led actors are in

advantage, as pusher of such intergenerational dialogue. They have been looking for addressing youth issues, and listening to youth's voice about their proposed agenda for this dialogue. Both interviews and document analysis show such pattern (Oxfam 2000/2003; Tancredi 2005; Interview 2006j, 2006a, 2006l; PT 2006b; Thompson 2006b; WB 2006). Non-youth-led achieve a large parcel of the youth, and not only the more organised and politicised segments of it; they hence find enough space to promote such dialogue, with whomever youngster attending their invitations. It is important to say that this is already a positive flow (adult-youth), but it is also worthing saying that it is not enough to achieve a full intergenerational dialogue.

On the other hand, the youth segment here in case seems to be more timid, so far, in provoking such dialogue. As observed, the reasons drift around a set of society's misunderstandings in the manner it perceives the youth and the youth's interests over society. Specialists on youth issues are not necessarily specialists on youth's political interests towards society. The more organised and politicised segments of the youth do not want to be treated as target groups; otherwise, they will to act in equal power conditions as any other social actor in society (Rocha *et al.* 2005; Interview 2006i, 2006e, 2006h, 2006b). I believe that this specific segment of the youth is the one with greater potential to add qualitative value for the development of our societies, not forgetting about all other segments, of course. Such misunderstandings lead these segments to avoid interacting with non-youth-led actors, apart the ones with their own communities. What we loose here is the richness of the contrary flow (youth-adult) in the dialogue. As a result, the agenda setting (Lukes 1974) of the current intergenerational dialogue that exists in Recife, and perhaps in many other places as well, has been dominated by non-youth-led actors. It generates a dialogue that is not fully fulfilled, hence disempowering the youth.

Image 6: Agenda setting flow in intergenerational dialogues



Note: Author's creation.

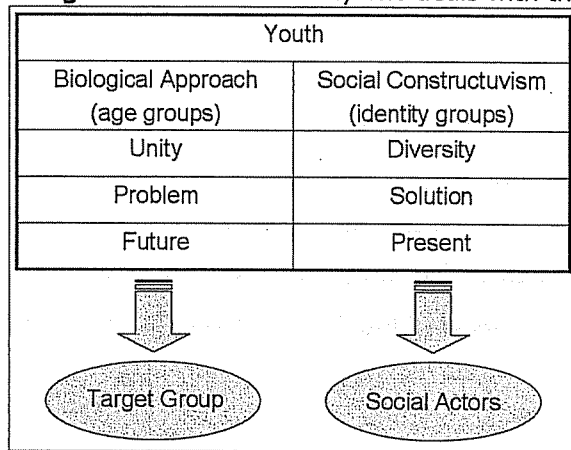
More equilibrium in this power relation is needed, and actions must be taken in both sides of the story. On the one hand, non-youth-led actors should pay more attention to spontaneous youth associativism and a mean to provoke change in society, rather than an end in itself or as a way to only pursue issue rights and issues. On the other hand, youth-led actors should become more open and should provoke more intergenerational dialogue led by their own agenda.

There are clear signals of understanding from the RRS members that the root-causes of the problems they want to see changed in their neighbourhood are caused by external factors that invade their homes without invitation (Souza 2005; CDP 2006; Interview 2006f). However, there are also signals that the RRS disagree with this unbalanced power relation (ibid.) within society. As a consequence the RRS is not yet willing to fight for power within macro-structures, like governments, big companies and big NGOs. Instead, they prefer to build their empowerment locally, to remake the social, political and economical foundations of their communities, for their liberation (Souza 2005; Interview 2006f). The problem, as I see it, is that doing only this, they are not tackling the root-causes of the problems, which lay on macro and external structures, but only their local effects. This behaviour reveals a contradiction, once we cannot recognise the existence of many external powers over us and deny macro-action upon them. For that, the challenge now lays in advancing a youth-led agenda into the womb of our societies, where the root-causes of the felt local effects are bred.

Many possibilities there are to tackle this situation, concerning both non-youth and youth-led actors in society. For instance, a new attitude from non-youth-led actors could be firstly in relation to new ways of defining and relating to the youth. To look at youth as diversity, identity, source of solutions and present is something that could start making some difference. This opens space for treating the youth as an actual actor in society, and not as a mere target group, or as a vulnerable risk group only (see image 7). Secondly, it is important to distinguish youth policies from youth politics; recognising, thus, the spontaneous youth associativism and the youth-led actors interests in each context specific situation. These are all possible ways to overcome the paradigm between needs and rights based approaches, towards what I am calling here agency based approach; a new approach that privileges the natural power of society actors to pursue a their political agenda of transformation and development for the whole society.

Apart of seeing youth as an end in itself, there are ways to evolve the discussion and to start seeing the youth also as a means to provoke change in society, taking advantage of the fact that among the many social categories one can define (gender, ethnicity, generation and so on), youth is the only one that naturally migrates from one category to another, once that under normal conditions young people will certainly be adults while time passes on (like today, this one here whose words you read); being this behave a unique evolving characteristic for long-term sustained development.

Image 7: Trends in the way one deals with the youth



Note: Author's creation (cf. section 2.1)

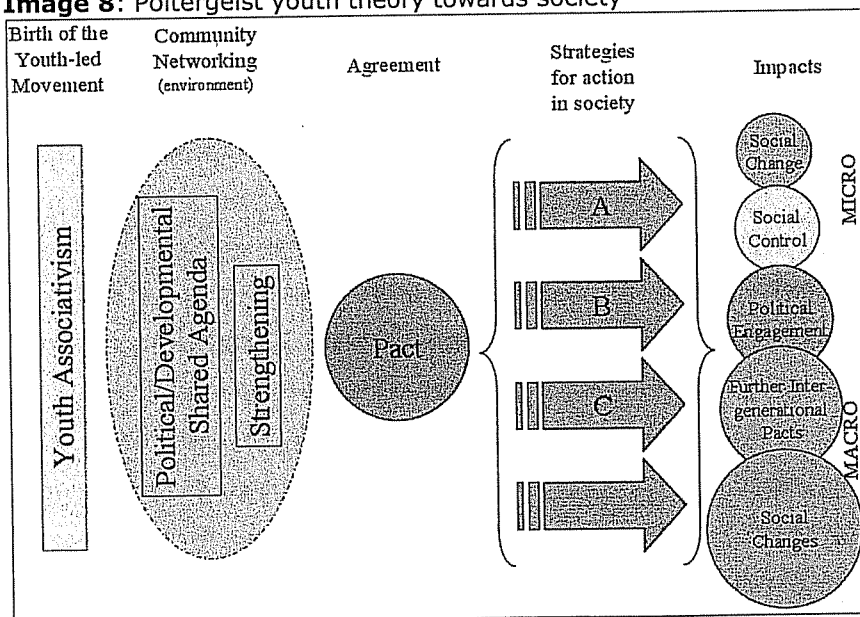
On the other hand, youth-led actors can find many ways to tackle these intergenerational problems as well. A good metaphor to it is the movie *Poltergeist* (Hooper and Spielberg 1982). In it, a family is threatened by strange phenomena in its own house. Non-invited ghosts disturb the family, messing around its home, until they finally kidnap the youngster member of the family, imprisoning the little girl into the ghosts' realm. With the external help of a paranormal medium, the remaining members of the family decide to fight this battle now in the ghost's territory and not in their house anymore. The house would become a place for strengthening and action planning, not for conflictive battles. With a big rope, the family elects one of its members to go into ghosts' world and fight against their objectives; if anything went wrong (like life risk, imprisonment and even cooptation) they would not hesitate in pulling the rope and its member safely back to home; at least until the next try.

Similar to the movie, youth-led actors like the RRS report to be being visited by external forces that intentionally or not, that is not the merit, mess around with their communities. The awareness about this fact is what generates the initial

restlessness, and the ultimate action that made the RRS came into being. As in the movie, it is time perhaps for youth-led actors to use their agency to provoke their own political agenda into the non-youth-led actors of society. For that, tight and long ropes may be used, and members are supposed to be willing and be elected to dive into the macro structures of society, to pursue their claimed transformations and development; therefore, using youth's built in empowerment to increase its level of influence within macro locus of power in society (agency based approach). To name these macro structures, youth may use their power and collective action to jump into political parties (would it be better to occupy an existing party or to create another one?), into government bodies (running for elections with the ropes?), into the big media (exercising pressure on it, creating alternative media broadcasters?), into NGOs (to change their views towards the youth?), and so forth.

The youth in this case-study has proven to me the natural, legitimate and unique power to invert this catchphrase equation. From local to global, from micro to macro; youth-led actors may contribute to change the famous "think globally, act locally" into something like think locally, act globally. For that, youth-led actors should not fear the macro structures of power; on the contrary, they should use their spontaneous associativism, together with its current community networking to create local intergenerational pacts proposed and by youth-led actors to exercise influence over macro structures; the main root-sources of their local problems (see image 8).

Image 8: Poltergeist youth theory towards society



Note: Author's creation.

It is not meant to be a linear process; however, it may represent a different level of youth-led action towards society, for the final objectives to be implemented, which along all interviews are clearly understood as social, political and economical justice, power balance and equilibrium, and community autonomy. This ending achievement, when youth's level of influence in society becomes higher, has all potentiality to last in more longer terms, because the youth-led actors of today will soon become the non-youth-led actors of tomorrow. Having passed through this process will certainly lead to healthier future intergenerational dialogues among the generations still to come. Whatever will happen in this relationship depends much of the agency of the youth over macro structures, rather than in the solidarity of society.

6. Conclusions

The problem of the role and the level of influence of youth-led actors in society, for development, reveal some interesting conclusions. Drawing from our research question (*to what extent has the RRS Recife youth network influenced adult society since its birth in early 2005?*), the way the RRS has been trying to exercise some influence in society since its birth in January 2005 has deeper roots, coming back to the origins of the organisations and individuals within this network. From clear signals of restlessness among young people, spontaneous youth associativism was likely to happen, and as it did youth-led groups and organisations naturally turn their political agenda towards the root causes of their member's restlessness; generally, society related issues, and not youth own issues.

This movement represents a key factor for linking youth-led and non-youth-led actors in society, because they show interest in the same field of development. Nevertheless, this interest seems not to be enough, once it materialises in different agendas for the basis of this intergenerational relationship. Clearly, non-youth-led actors are leading this dialogue with their own youth-rights based agenda, while, on the other hand, youth-led actors avoid both to discuss this proposed agenda and hence to associate themselves as young actors, as a manner to keep focused on the real political agenda behind their initiatives. Without a clear and more equal intergenerational dialogue, long-term development initiatives tend to fail, once the link between the generations is not strong enough to sustain its long-term continuity. As a consequence, initiatives initially conceived as long-term development program may lead to the path of short-term service delivery. Furthermore, the generational problem circles become harder to be broken.

This youth-adult relationship may lead to both conflict and partnership. On the one hand, the partnerships are being more proposed by non-youth-led actors, according to their agenda aiming the youth. On the other hand, conflicts become an unwanted result of this relationship, when there is little space for youth-led actors to carry on their own agenda towards society. In the case of the RRS, since early 2005 its strategy has been to separate macro and local structures of power, and hence to focus on the local ones. On the local spheres (their own communities and network) they use solidarity as the main component for this intergenerational relationship, and nice results indeed arise due to the reported level of acceptance and commitment from non-youth actors within these communities. Antagonistically,

for macro realms they use resistance as a leading strategy, to avoid the perceived negative influence that macro structures (not only the big media, governments, political parties, but also big companies and even NGOs) exercise within their communities and network.

Due to these significant different approaches towards intergenerational relationships, the level of influence of the RRS has been more effective in their own local communities, but it is still very low indeed in the rest of society, due to some tiredness from youth towards society and some discrimination from society towards the youth. Once again, this contradiction reveals the current low capacity of the RRS to provoke structural change in their macro society, once its members show clear understanding that the root-causes of their local problems lay on external and macro structural factors, but still insist to only tackle them through resistance.

In sum, many lessons can be learnt from this case indeed, like: there is a clear difference between youth policy and youth politics; generational vicious circles are predominantly being addressed by youth-led actors in local spheres of action, rather than macro ones; the way youth-led actors organise themselves is rather different and alternative, and this must be understood by non-youth-led actors; there is a constant tension between youth-led actors and the rest of society, due to traces of discrimination and tiredness among generations; real youth empowerment is more needed than invited youth participation in this dialogue; agency based approaches may be one of the ways out to overcome the paradigm between needs and rights based approaches; it is not only the society that must change to balance this relationship, but also the youth-led actors themselves; and finally, there are many possibilities for both youth-led and non-youth-led actors to tackle the problem, and it is only up to them to grab the right opportunities to make them happen.

As seen during this research, for intergenerational poverty circles (Morán and Aldaz-Carroll 2001; Morán 2004; WKKF 2005a; Thompson 2006a) to be broken, there is a need to observe more youth agency based approaches towards society, and hence more equilibrium of power in intergenerational partnerships. In consequence, this equilibrium of roles may culminate in distinctive and long-term intergenerational partnerships, as well as it may open new fronts of research about the locus of intergenerational approaches for long-term sustainable development.

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Annex A: History and political agenda of RRS members

(Interview 2006e, 2006c, 2006d, 2006b)

Organisation	History and political agenda
<p>MPL Recife</p> 	<p>Brief History MPL Recife has its roots in youth clashes of November 2005 (Silva 2005), when the public transportation fare in Recife was once again being raised, affecting basically students and unemployed people in the city, who could not afford another increase. It followed the path of a similar movement that took place in Salvador/Brazil, in 2002, due to the same fare problem. In Recife, initially, it was dominated by youth branches of left-wing political parties, but months later these, during a internal crisis and division, the independent youth members created the MPF Recife to avoid the interference of political parties.</p> <p>Main point of its political agenda In July 2006, the main claims were turned to the state government and to other social movements. On the one hand, it was pressuring the public sphere not only against the raising transportation fare in the city, but it was pursuing to achieve the free fare for all who are students or are currently unemployed; on the other hand, they were seeking to put pressure in other social movements for them to have new model of internal organisation (management and horizontal power relations).</p>
<p>Ventilador Cultural</p> 	<p>Brief History Before 2003 the three initial members worked together in a community television channel in Recife, when due to internal power disputes and divisions, these three decided to leave and to create what today is the <i>Ventilador Cultural</i>.</p> <p>Main point of its political agenda In August 2006, the main points pursued were: communication as a human right, not only to receive qualitative content, but most importantly broadcasting as a human right; democratisation and regionalisation of the current communication media system; social justice and education for all.</p>
<p>CMI Recife</p> 	<p>Brief History The current young members had their first contact with IndyMedia International during the WSF 2003, and after back to Recife the realised there was a non-operational committee in the city. Soon after, the committee was operational again, now being youth-led; although IndyMedia is not a youth-led organisation itself, its branch in Recife has become one.</p> <p>Main point of its political agenda In August 2006, its main point was clearly based on the radical democratisation of the media, for it to be of use for a complete emancipation of the human being. Parallel points come across democracy, human rights and land reform.</p>
<p>Coletivo Êxito d'Rua</p> 	<p>Brief History It started as a hip-hop cultural group named <i>Combate Permanente</i>, where political songs and graffiti competition were the main practices. Between 1999 and 2000, <i>Combate Permanente</i> came to an end, and <i>Coletivo Êxito d'Rua</i> was born, leaving most of its musical aspects behind and focusing a lot on political activism towards society, adding the a fifth element to hip-hop: politics. Recognising that alone it would not provoke too much change, it was the initial cell of what came to be the RRS.</p> <p>Main point of its political agenda Among the main points there are: community liberation (Souza 2005); rise of a new awareness wave; dialog with the city; more horizontal relations; and a subversive behaviour of resistance and solidarity.</p>

Annex B: Actions and impact of RRS members

(Interview 2006e, 2006c, 2006d, 2006b; Rodrigues and Marques 2006; Zimmermann 2006)

Organisation	Action and Impact
<p>MPL Recife</p> 	<p>Principal Initiatives</p> <p>Until July 2006, its initiatives towards society were basically through organising seminars to debate their agenda; carrying out cultural interventions to call attention of the public to the cause; calling street manifestations; and strengthening the communication capabilities to reach more and more audience, particularly with blog they publish on the internet.</p> <p>Perceived Impact</p> <p>As current impact, they just perceive that the group's communication effort is reaching more students and young people in general, especially through the internet; plus, they also mention as impact the group's internal strengthening. To achieve more impact, they say to be challenged by: the realisation that the public opinion attention to it agenda is low; and that its communication effort is contradictorily making the group to act more on internet bases, rather than real world bases.</p>
<p>Ventilador Cultural</p> 	<p>Principal Initiatives</p> <p>In August 2006, it was reported that the group is focusing on two main pillars: the first is campaigning through producing independent and free media content (the last two campaigns were related to the abuse of beer producers' advertisements deteriorating the image of the women in Brazil, and a campaign for more debate during the selection of the Brazilian digital TV standard), and the second is providing strategic communication free of cost services for other social organisations and movements. In parallel, it is starting to do some communicative agents training courses.</p> <p>Perceived Impact</p> <p>According to the group, its main impacts are the visibility the campaigns are achieving, like the one about the digital TV standard, that created a strong political discomfort between the Communication Chief Ministry and the Culture Chief Ministry of Lula's government (Rodrigues and Marques 2006; Zimmermann 2006); therefore such campaigns are rising the group's image and credibility in society. Beyond, the group says it is challenged by some campaigns that fail, like the one about the beer producers, embargoed by the judiciary branch.</p>
<p>CMI Recife</p> 	<p>Principal Initiatives</p> <p>CMI reports its 2006 activities based in responding the need for communication of social movements with free of cost services, via publishing their news at the Brazilian IndyMedia website. Furthermore, they are also organising workshops for increasing participative media production within other social movements.</p> <p>Perceived Impact</p> <p>The group says to have helped the creation and strengthening of other youth-led movements, like the MPL Recife. Another self-perceived impact is that each day more they are being actual information sources to both social movements, like the MST, and the big media (positively writing and publishing about social movements). The increasing number of social movements inviting the group seeking for alternative media coverage is still another impact the groups reports.</p>
<p>Coletivo Êxito d'Rua</p> 	<p>Principal Initiatives</p> <p>The group described that its main activitie to achieve its political agenda is the RRS itself. The group was the first cell of it and, therefore, exercise an important leadership role within it. Other activities are musical-political shows, the use of artistic graffiti as political communication in the city, a musical seal called <i>Embolada Records</i> to help other hip-hop politicised groups, and lastly different kinds of street interventions.</p> <p>Perceived Impact</p> <p>As noticed by the group, it is already influencing young people from other Brazilian states and regions to reproduce their work, including naturally multiplying the RRS to other cities, like Natal and Rio de Janeiro. Besides, it recognises as an impact the communities' call for them to act there. In addition, an internal impact is the horizontal power relation within the group, and an external one the increasing number of invitations by local universities and the local government for the group to make speeches or projects.</p>

Annex C: Table of Translations

Academia de Desenvolvimento Social	Social Development Academy Institute Recife, PE, Brazil www.movimentojuvenil.org.br
CMI Recife	Centro de Mídia Independente Recife Recife, PE, Brazil
Centro de Mídia Independente Recife	Independent Media Centre, affiliated with IndyMedia International www.indymedia.org or www.midiaindependente.org (Brazilian website)
Coletivo Êxido d’Rua	Street Exodus Collective Recife, PE, Brazil www.exitodrua.org.br
Combate Permanente	Permanent Combat Originally in Portuguese
Movimento Passe Livre Recife	Recife’s Free Transportation Fare Movement Recife, PE, Brazil http://mplrecife.blogspot.com
Pontos de Cultura	Points of Culture A Brazilian Governmental program led by the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Labour to articulate the exchange of local cultural production all over the country, aimed towards the youth.
Rede de Resistência Solidária	Network of Solidary Resistance Recife, PE, Brazil
Ventilador Cultural	Cultural Fan Recife, PE, Brazil http://br.geocities.com/ventiladorcultural

Annex D: Political Map of Brazil, 2006



Source: <http://www.mapsofworld.com/brazil/maps/brazil-political-map.jpg>