Dreaming and becoming at the time of the World Cup.
Visual narratives and performance strategies of two young Brazilians in offline-online urban São Paulo

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Abstract

The Brazilian urban periphery is experiencing new opportunities, the possibility of a social mobility that was unforeseen just a decade ago, the result of years of specific policies dedicated to the urban poor, of general policies aimed at the redistribution of income, and of the stability of the Brazilian economy.

My study focuses on the process of self-realization of two young Brazilians, Fabio Guimarães Gava and Ana Carolina Rocha, that came from the urban periphery and reached the center of São Paulo. The World Cup is the historical context within that I observed, participated in and filmed their daily lives, a privileged period that aroused their self-reflections. The consciousness in their self-presentation is central in their career development and individual achievements, as their ability of acquiring network, of grasping opportunities and finding their way through the obstacles they encounter. Their interactive visual narrative of self online, can help them to emerge, to social navigate: it makes them visible and it helps them to be included in the society they want to be part of.

In my study I focused on their visual narratives of self in Facebook and their performances in front of the camera. By analyzing and confronting them, I interpreted how their online visual narrative, can influence their emergence in society. I could investigate how, through their online narration of self and interactivity, Carol and Fabio can dream their envisaged selves, and try to reach them.

Keywords: Brazil, urbanity, self-presentation, social media, visual, social mobility
Table of content

Acknowledgments.............................................................................................................i

Abstract..............................................................................................................................iii

Glossary...............................................................................................................................vii

List of abbreviations..............................................................................................................vii

1) Introduction.........................................................................................................................1

1.1 A brief premise: why did I choose this study?.................................................................1
1.2 São Paulo: a city in flux...................................................................................................4
1.3 The emerging Brazilian middle class: the socio-economical context.............................6
1.4 Social media and the visual: the online narratives and the becoming.............................7
1.5 The World Cup 2014: dreams and self-reflections.........................................................8
1.6 Objectives and structure of the thesis............................................................................11

2) The actors of the study seen from a subjective anthropological perspective..............12

2.1 Fabio and his struggles to become an independent artist..............................................12
2.2 Carol, an emerging professional in the social media world of São Paulo.....................17

3) Methods and tools used in this study.............................................................................20

3.1 Reflexivity: about the idea of doing anthropology at “home” or “elsewhere”..............20
3.2 Accessibility when approaching the public and the private: a city of walls?...............22
3.3 Participant observation with a camera...........................................................................24
3.4 Interaction, empowerment and seduction.......................................................................25
3.5 The FB page of the project: a research, dissemination and promotional tool...............28
3.6 The selection of the footage: a process of investigation and analysis.......................29

4) Theoretical framework.................................................................31

5) The visual narrative of self in Facebook and their performance to the camera........33

5.1 Fabio.........................................................................................34
5.2 Carol..........................................................................................39

6) Anthropological insights in the most salient situations chosen in the film..........43

7) Dreaming and becoming in online-offline urban São Paulo.................................63

Bibliography......................................................................................69
Glossary

comment: a facility in Facebook where a user can reply to another user’s posting;

Facebook friend: a user of Facebook can become friend with another and by doing so they have the possibility of e.g. chatting, commenting, posting to the other friend; the user can also pre-set the desired level of interaction with his friends and restrict it or expand it;

follower: is a lower form of interaction in Facebook than the friendship, in which one user the follower, if allowed by the pre-setting of the other (the followed) can see his/her posting.

like: the possibility for a user of Facebook of signaling the appreciation of a posting of another user;

offline: disconnected from the internet;

online: connected to the internet;

Paulistano: inhabitant of São Paulo city;

Paulista: inhabitant of São Paulo State;

posting: the possibility for the users of Facebook to insert a content, picture, video and/or a text;

profile pictures: the pictures that identify a user, they appear on the left side of one’s individuals’ page, they also appear on the left side of his/her postings, likes or comments.

share: the possibility of reproducing by quoting the posting of other users on our timeline, or in the wall;

timeline: the list of posting that concern a user, one can see that in his individual Facebook page;

wall: is the space in Facebook where users can make their posting, and they see, comment, like, or share the others’ posting.

2.0.: in its origin, this term generally referred to a development of the interactivity and possibility of participating in the creation of content in the internet. Today it also refers to the commercialization of social media and the internet;
List of abbreviations

FB: Facebook;
SP: São Paulo;
VCS: Visual Cultural Studies;
WC: The Brazilian World Cup of 2014.
1) Introduction

1.1 A brief premise: why did I choose this study?

On the 18th of January 2013 I arrived in the city of São Paulo from Copenhagen, where I had lived for the previous 2 years. The reason for my travel was Sarah, whom I had met during a party with friends in Christianshavn and who just less than a year later, would become my wife.

When looking over São Paulo, this giant and some say ugly (I cannot agree) jungle of concrete, my eyes were and still are soaked by the feelings I have for the person that changed the trajectory of my life. These feelings inevitably shape my subjective perspective over the city and its social transformations, and have to be taken into consideration when reading my analysis.

Given this important premise, let's get back to the travel: I quit my job in Copenhagen, sublet my room in Vesterbro and took a flight, leaving the Danish winter behind me and arriving at the biggest metropolis of South America, in the middle of the Brazilian Summer. My first assumption before getting there was that by traveling very far from Europe, I was going much farther from “home” (the central Alps of Italy, where I originally come from) than Copenhagen. As soon as I arrived, I realized that I was wrong in thinking so, in fact I had somehow rather taken a longer way home. Indeed I was immediately surprised, even if I had been warned about how in São Paulo “… you feel a little bit at home, and extraordinarily elsewhere” (Translation from Barba, 2010, 19).

The metropolis appeared to me both “home”: like an Italian city, its cafés on the streets, the smell of espresso, the people chatting inside and outside on the tables, the restaurants and the social interactions among people in the markets; and yet extremely elsewhere: with the grey skyscrapers of Avenida Paulista (the most central street of the metropolis) shaping the horizon, the tropical and humid air, the variety of people and faces coming toward me in the street.

During the following 3 months in the metropolis, I got to know Sarah better and explored the city with her. I met many of her friends, her family, and everywhere I went I felt as though I was treated like the umpteenth relative who comes to visit or move to São Paulo. Of course I was a stranger, but inexplicably (at least for me at that time) also part of the society, already with ties in a country which is placed thousands of miles away from my place of origin.
Later, I interpreted this feeling of being immediately included, of being part of the social environment in two main ways:

- First: there is a widespread generosity, benevolence of Brazilians and *Paulistanos* toward “*os gringos*” (the strangers), a tendency to include them (that applies especially to Northern Americans and Europeans);

- Second: many *Paulistanos* have Italian ancestors and/or family ties with Italy. Brazil in general, and São Paulo in particular, have a strong Italian influence because of the different big migrations during its history, e.g. “…between the middle of the nineteenth century until the middle of the 50’s 1 million and 600 thousands Italians immigrated in Brazil” (Barba, 2014, 174). Many people I have met in SP, after I told them I was Italian, were enthusiastic in telling me something about the story of part of their family; how they migrated to Brazil or SP, that they originally came from Italy, or Portugal, or Germany etc. They were eager to express our common belonging, the origins, from Italy or Europe.

Therefore, it has been rather easy for me as an Italian (but that could also apply to a Japanese, a German, a Portuguese, a Syrian, etc., given the cosmopolitan nature of the city and the importance of the various big communities that immigrated to São Paulo) to feel included in the city, and equally it has been easy for *Paulistanos* to include me in their social environment.

While exploring the city and meeting some of her friends, I was dreaming of a possible future with Sarah, and I imagined that SP could be a place for me: like millions of others before me did, I could also become a *Paulistano*. I became fascinated by the epic, the narratives behind these historical migrations to Brazil and SP: the stories of people who crossed the ocean in order to try to make it there, to find a better life. I thought about moving there to seek opportunities, looking for a better life myself, like Sarah and many of her friends did, when they moved to SP and like many among their ancestors did, moving from Europe to Brazil.

Furthermore, something made São Paulo more appealing to me than “home”: an electricity in the air, the feeling that changes were happening all around, a contagious positive energy among Sarah’s friends, many young people with different opportunities, starting to have important roles in society, something that Italy and to a certain extent Europe too, in this period of its history and due e.g. to the economical crisis, lacked completely.

Thanks to her, because of her profession and social environment (she is a web developer working within the world of social media), I approached a São Paulo of young professionals working in different ways across social media, publicity and art; friends and colleagues, many
of whom are very active and some quite known online. I soon realized that many of her friends were emerging public figures of the online-offline urbanity of São Paulo because of their engagement, their ability to communicate and share contents with the social media. I started to develop an anthropological (1) and an economical interest (2) in this reality:
1. on the one side, I was enthused and fascinated by the contagious positive energy that surrounded them and by the extreme dynamism of the city;
2. on the other, I was starting to become more aware of the importance of social media, and I thought I could learn some of their skills which could benefit me in my own search for opportunities.

Less than a year after, in January 2014 in Tromsø, when choosing the theme of my Master thesis and film at Visual Cultural Studies, I was still in doubt. I had planned to research in Greenland, or in Northern Norway, because I had more than 2 years of experience of studying anthropology in the Arctic, but I was often thinking about Brazil and I wanted to transform my anthropological interest of 2013 into an anthropological inquiry. In June and July 2014 something central would have taken place: the World Cup of football. “The Cup in the país do futebol, the country of football, a central historical event...” I was saying to myself. Already in 2013 throughout preparations, the Cup elicited strong feelings, debates and reflections across the whole country, but especially in SP, both in the streets and within social media.

Some years before, during my Master in Cultural Anthropology in Genoa by attending the lectures in urban anthropology and anthropology of football of Professor Bruno Barba, I could approach some of the deep meanings underlying football in Brazilian society, e.g. the importance of the World Cup in Brazilian history, how football evokes powerful dreams among Brazilians like the dream of being at the center, of social redemption. I therefore thought that the event of the World Cup as a chosen period to film and research, could be revealing when trying to understand the dreams and lives of some of the people I encountered in SP.

“The World Cup enables Brazilians to talk about their history, enthusing us with their identity formation, explaining how the country lives and dreams.” (Translation from Barba, 2014, 56)

After the last hesitations, I then decided that my fieldwork would be placed in São Paulo and I contacted four people among the circle of Sarah’s friends: Fabio Gava, Ana Carolina Rocha (referred as Carol), Clara Averbuck and Bruno Maia. Two of them, Fabio and Carol, are close friends of Sarah and I, they are working within the social media sphere and have an atelier in
their house where they paint. The other two, Clara Averbuck and Bruno Maia, are respectively a feminist writer and a human rights activist and protester.

In choosing whom I invited to participate in the film and research, I was guided by my wish of deepening my relationship with Fabio and Carol (Carol is Sarah’s best friend), and by the intention of understanding part of the dynamism of the city, of the new emerging Brazilian middle class. Fabio and Carol, in my mind embodied the hopeful and dreaming contemporary Brazil. Furthermore, just before I contacted Fabio, he asked me if we could do a project together, so I asked him if he and Carol would have liked to participate in the film. Sarah suggested me to contact Clara, a friend of her, because she admired her ideas and what she wrote, and afterwards I contacted Bruno, indicated by a friend of Sarah, because I wanted to hear the street protest perspective and experience during the Cup.

Later, in the process of development of the thesis and the editing, I finally chose to focus my research on Fabio and Carol, as I had collected more archive of material about them. The footage material and field notes about Bruno and Clara, will be used to develop another film.

Carol and Fabio’s story of social redemption has a special meaning for me, because it very closely resembles that of Sarah. She, as they also do, comes from the periphery and reached the middle class center of SP thanks to her efforts, determination, dynamism and her ability to grasp opportunities (for which I deeply admire her). Together with the different new possibilities she achieved in her life by becoming part of the middle class, she could travel to Europe, where we met.

1.2 São Paulo: a city in flux

My anthropological inquiry took mainly place in the central zone of the city, a very heterogeneous and hectic area. With a population 11.895.893\(^1\) and a metropolitan area of 20.284.891\(^2\) inhabitants, São Paulo city is the economical engine and the main metropolis of Brazil, the biggest city of South America and the Southern Hemisphere, a reality in constant change and evolution. In 1957, the metropolitan area was composed of 9.6 million inhabitants, that became 18 in 2005\(^3\).

Zweig in 1976 described the rhythm of the city with these words:

”It's difficult to have a static image of São Paulo because the city continues to enlarge, it is exaggeratedly restless in its fast transformation. The best way to show it would be through a

\(^2\) http://produtos.seade.gov.br/produtos/perfil_regional/index.php;
\(^3\) http://www.emplasa.sp.gov.br/emplasa/indicadores_metropolitanos_emplasa/documentos/IME/Populacao.pdf;
film, one of those that hour by hour increase the tempo. No city of Brazil and a few in the entire world can be compared, in the impetuosity of evolution, to this that is the most ambitious and most dynamic city of the country." (Translated from Barba, 2010, 26)

Walking and living in the center in both 2013 and 2014, I observed the rhythm of this fast changing reality: cars, busses, white minibuses (called combi), motorcycles, people and some (many more and more) brave cyclists running within the thousands of grey skyscrapers. White and glassy buildings in construction or newly built stand side by side with many “old” (here one should reflect on what is considered to be old in a young country like Brazil) grey and decadent ones. The tropical weather, with heavy rains, warm temperatures and smog, together with the low quality of the materials, are allies in corroding the surfaces of the buildings that look old even if they were build just a couple of decades ago. The grey concrete pillars are constantly being replaced by the white shiny new ones which will also turn matt and old and will be rapidly replaced: SP grants to just very few buildings the privilege of becoming part of its history. The present and the future are the celebrated ages, the only ones this city seems to have time for.

“São Paulo não pode parar”, “São Paulo can’t stop”, Paulistanos (the inhabitants of São Paulo city) say like a mantra. There is no time nor reasons to admirable the past, no time to contemplate it, to look behind: the now and especially the “becoming” are the leitmotive, central recurring principles to take into account when one attempts to approach the “syntax” of the language of Paulistanos’ thinking, investigate how they relate to the reality around them. The Paulistano is in fact a particular type of Brazilian, “... it is different and very proud of being so. It is the conqueror, the efficient, the worker.” (Translated from Barba, 2014, 171)

During the fieldwork, in order to understand the way people live in SP, I decided to get in contact with the city itself, to explore it and see what it elicited in me. I chose so, because as soon as I arrived there in 2013, I perceived how one can’t remain indifferent to it. I felt that its architecture, tropical weather, traffic, suffocating rhythm, its sense of becoming, its anxiety from being central and celebrated, whether you approve it or not, get ingrained in your life, becoming (please excuse my obsessive but motivated repetition of this gerund) a modus vivendi between you (as the others living there) and the city.

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4 “Syntax: the study of the principles and processes by which sentences are constructed in particular languages”
http://books.google.co.uk/books?id=SNeHkMXHcd8C&pg=PA11&dq=%22syntax+is+the+study+of+the+principles+and+processes+by+which+sentences+are+constructed+in+particular+languages%22#v=onepage&q=%22syntax%20is%20the%20study%20of%20the%20principles%20and%20processes%20by%20which%20sentences%20are%20constructed%20in%20particular%20languages%22&f=false
Here are some first impressions, from the field notes of early June 2014 published in the FB page of my film-research project https://www.facebook.com/wonderingpeople:

“The area around our flat, very similarly to others in São Paulo, is a jungle of concrete, changing from year to year, months to months. It seems that the tropical climate is trying (in vain) to fight against “o progresso”, the progress, of the capitalist economy with its fast growing skyscrapers; the humidity, the roots of some of the beautiful luxuriant trees of its sidewalks, memories of the old Mata Atlântica, the subtropical forest, that was covering the area, are emerging from the ground, attempting to corrode the grey concrete to compromise its “rational” project.”

After the first weeks of exploration of São Paulo, I concentrated my efforts in following, filming and interpreting part of the lives of the two actors.

1.3 The emerging Brazilian middle class: the socio-economical context

In recent years, Brazil has experienced a constant increase in the average of salaries, more access to education and the lowest unemployment rates of its history. In general, “… the social ascent of the poorest classes and the emergence of them as “thinking (and protesting) subject…” (Translated from Barba, 2014, 26). The new social mobility was incentivized by e.g. the economical stability and the federal and municipal supports to the urban poor:

“Since the start of the 21st century, the country's urban poor have received more federal and municipal support, greater educational opportunities and better access to back credit, transport, recreation and sport” (UN-ABITAT, 2010, xii)

“… a new integration of the rising middle class and the increasingly socially mobile poor that may mitigate the more rigid dynamics of the city's past pattern of segregation.” (Idem, 19)

In the city of São Paulo these processes have been even more intense than in the rest of the country; it is a city in transition, that despite still having some of the highest levels of inequality in the world, is showing positive trends with the middle class growing and the income inequality constantly decreasing.

“While analysts of the globalization process and its impact on “global cities” warn that wealth concentration at the higher and lower ends in the income scale are more likely to increase than decrease, São Paulo's growth appears to be different. Instead, and in the midst of massive inequalities, the middle class is on the rise and income inequalities (measured by Gini coefficient) are falling.” (Idem, xi-xii)
The desperate mass of poor on the one side and the opulent rich on the other, the helicopters and the lacking public transportation, the *favelas* (the Brazilian slums) and the gated communities: these dichotomies are some among the many paradoxes of urban Brazil. The contrasts are highly present, very visible in the social economical landscape of SP and they offer a seducing scenario for a compelling narrative of the city. Nevertheless, they are reductive if taken as definitive and exhaustive, and they limit the analysis of the more nuanced, interesting and complex reality of today's São Paulo.

My study focuses on the dreams and becoming in the lives of two young people who are immersed in the hopefuls economical and social processes that are happening in the city and Brazil as a whole. The reality I described in this text and portrayed in the film is therefore one of optimism and hope, even if Fabio and Carol, in different ways, are critical of the careerism, the social issues and the lack of security of SP.

By describing their specific lives, one of my main aims is to counteract the negative stereotypes that surround the perspectives over Brazil, catalyzed e.g. by the media: the un-nuanced narratives of Brazil that portray it as the country of insurmountable dichotomies, of violence, of fear etc. By doing so, I am not trying to deny them, nor the problems of the country or SP; like its social issues, the poverty, the lack of security, I just don’t want to make them the center of my representation. In both the film and text in fact, I avoided giving too much space to the image that SP earned in the late 80's and beginning of the 90's as the city of crime. Crime is indeed overrepresented in the imaginary and in the filmic representation of Brazil as a whole (starting for example with the famous pictures of “Central Station” of Walter Salles, 1987, continuing with “City of God” of Fernando Meirelles, 2002, and ending with Elite Squad of José Padilha, 2007). Therefore I wanted to show the hopefuls middle tones, a different side of contemporary Brazil and São Paulo, more discrete maybe, but telling; that of two people that are part of a changing society.

1.4 Social media and the visual: the online narratives and the becoming

“There are strong indications that the status of images is improving. We live in a mediated blitz of images. They fill our newspapers, magazines, books, clothing, billboards, computer monitors and television screens as never before in the history of mass communications. Something is happening. We are becoming a visually mediated society. For many,
understanding of the world is being accomplished, not through reading words, but by reading images."

The communication amongst people in many areas of the world, comprehended Brazil, is becoming more visual. Facebook as other social media, are part of this trend, in fact as Favero writes:

“Facebook grows by one to two billion images a week, testifying how the conversations enacted on online social networks too are today increasingly made up of images (cf. Van House, 2011). All together, such new practices positions the field of imaging as a central arena of contemporary popular culture. This is a place in which identities, tastes and alliances are shaped” (Favero, 2014, 166)

In Facebook through images, videos and texts, approximately 1.39 billions of users perform their visual selves and negotiate their visual identities in interaction with the others: they test their ability to perform their visual selves in front of different audiences, they get and give feedbacks on and to each others’ visual narratives, they promote themselves and others. The ability to communicate content within it as in other social media, of producing an appealing narrative of self, can lead to the acquisition of an heterogeneous audience of followers and/or friends.

By performing their self-narratives online, Carol and Fabio can e.g. acquire power through their relationships with their audiences:

“Following Schieffeling (1998, 200), performances can be viewed, as the ‘expressive edge of practice’ or ‘contingent self-presentation’, the power of which lies in its interactivity, i.e. the relationships between performers and audiences.” (Uominen, 2013, 122)

The main hypothesis in my whole study is therefore that the visual narrative of self in the FB, can be an important tool in the actors’ process of becoming in their social lives and within their main fields of interest and work: the publicity and the art.

1.5 The World Cup 2014: dreams and self-reflections

Between June and July 2014, São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, Brasilia and other cities in Brazil, became the theaters of the biggest sport and media event that occurs every fourth year in the world: the World Cup.

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Football or *o futebol*, is central within the collective imagery of many Brazilians, representing among the others, an immense, omnipresent, living personal archive of images, emotions and memories. Besides this, football evokes various powerful and moving dreams in the country: e.g. the dream of social redemption, of dream of the great success, of getting out of the periphery (both physical, but also economical, decisional, intellectual, social), of emerging, of being protagonists. These aren't dreams that belong exclusively to the world of football, nor they are just the dreams of single Brazilian individuals, but widespread aspirations and ambitions that belong to a large part of the Brazilian society itself. Brazil as a society wants to grow, to become central, to be more recognized or even admired in the world, to count economically and also politically, to be part of the modernized West. These aspirations are especially shared among the Brazilians belonging the poor classes but also within the emerging middle class: they want to count in the Brazilian society as in the world, to be seen, to become central.

According to my experience, football is relentlessly reverberating in São Paulo and in the lives of Fabio and Carol as many other Paulistanos: from the glassy shiny skyscrapers of the center, its banks and big corporations, to the distant but now mildly hopeful periphery, with its poor neighborhoods and the slums, *(favelas)*. It spreads through the obsessive and omnipresent media, via the televisions in the houses, the big screens in the bars, the radios in the cars and in the streets (some radios in the city have even loud speakers that reach the people walking by the streets), through the talks of the people and within social media. The epic stories of the exploits and the often extravagant lives of the idolized (and for this reason often easily crucified) football players, the accelerated rhythm of the football chronicle and the consequent excited screams of the fans for a goal or a victory, are echoing success, they echo the myth of being someone, being in the center, acclaimed.

In my interpretation, football is like a constant reminder of the rush for success, of the competition, of what the dynamic metropolis and the society around them expect from Fabio and Carol. São Paulo forces them to play within its rules: in order to succeed in the city, they need to run, to not hesitate, to be competitive, to dribble the opponents, to tackle the problems, to emerge, to aim up, to dream. They are expected to do this in order to emerge, to become in the art world, in the publicity world, in the internet.

Football in my film and study is then a metaphorical space, a way to interpret the way of becoming of people in São Paulo. The Cup within this frame is not just about football: it also concerns a process of self-consciousness of the people’s own successes and defeats.
“The Cup gives the chance to Brazilians to talk about their history, enthuse us on their identity formation, explaining how the country lives and dreams” (Barba, 2014, 56)

The games in the process of becoming of Carol and Fabio are played on different fields - an important one among the others, is that of social media. As the case of Carol will show, the social media can provide a stage where individuals can emerge and become in a urban setting like that of SP, and where the social redemption can occur, because it can give a chance to access the labor market and the artistic life of nowadays Brazil.

Neymar, the Brazilian football star, is celebrated as an idol, as a God, a superhuman, when he succeeds, and he is sacrificed, annihilated on the altar of popularity when he hesitates, on the occasion that he shows some human weaknesses. On a different scale, that happens with Carol: she is celebrated in the social media, not because of her football gestures but because of her lifestyle and performance of self online. Her popularity in the web is on the one side, a resource to her that gives her possibilities in her profession, it makes her emerge. On the other, it can vanish or even turn against her if she makes some wrong moves, if she doesn’t have a clear field vision: i.e. if she doesn’t match the expectations of her audience when she performs, if she is not conscious of her audiences and her visual self. For example in the case she writes or posts some content that her audience doesn't approve of or dislikes, her popularity can decrease or even be annihilated, she risks to be humiliated, be embarrassed or be labeled.

In the film I tried to convey the competition and the anxiety of being someone that SP radiates in the lives of Fabio and Carol, by using footage from the games of the Cup in the bars, from the streets where the radio were talking about the football idols, and the voices of the actors describing the city. Some sentences selected from the film and the general filmed footage are in this sense, revelatory:

Fabio: “I don't like football, but football is always present in my daily life.”

Carol: “To understand the rhythm of the city. In order to succeed in São Paulo, one has to understand how to dance according the music that is played here.”

Fabio: “Every day I need to learn something to be better, like in the art. If I keep still in the art, nothing will happen, nothing.”

Carol: “If I don't learn something new everyday, I fall behind.”

Fabio: “In SP everyone needs to be someone, better than all the others, to be known.”
The Cup as an event with its obsessive echoing of success, elicited Fabio's wish and pressure to become someone, to succeed, as its consequent criticism and reflections about this dynamics. At the same time, it elicited Carol's pride and reflections over her story, her successes and difficulties.

1.6. Objectives and structure of the thesis
My first inquiry is this study was methodological: I explored how I could investigate the actors' daily lives by using some of the visual tools and methods.
My whole study is about visual ethnography, I constructed my anthropological knowledge based on visual information through all my work: from the filming fieldwork, to the analysis of the visual narrative of self and identity in FB through the profile pictures (chapter 5), and the analysis of the anthropological insights of the film through the screenshots (chapter 6).
The reason why I focused all my work on the visual, is directly linked to why I chose this Master: I intent to deepen how the visual could be used in an anthropological study. In fact I had experienced other two anthropological fieldworks before this and I thought that the visual could be revealing, especially considering the centrality of the images in the contemporary world (look at 1.4). Hence, it allowed me to delve deeper into the actors' urban daily lives and some particular themes:
- the narrative of self and the visual identity of the actors in FB;
- their performance in front of the camera and their visual consciousness;
- the emic ideas of becoming of the actors, emerging from the film;
I finally intend to reflect upon the following questions:
- What does dreaming mean in this context?
- How does the self-narrative of the actors online influence their becoming in society?

The result of the study is this thesis and a short ethnographic film of 29 minutes named “São Paulo in 2.0”. The thesis is divided into 7 chapters and some subchapters:
- As a part of the introduction (chapter 1), in the subchapter 1.1, I started the thesis by describing why I decided to make this study and who are the people I approached in São Paulo;
- 1.2 concerned the place where the study took place, it describes São Paulo and its flux, in order to provide some keys to understand the urban context where the actors of the film-research are immersed in;
- In 1.3 I briefly explained the macro context, some of the social-economic processes the actors are part of;
- In 1.4. I introduced the importance of social media and the visual in the context where the actors are navigating, as arenas and a form of communication and I proposed the hypothesis that social media can help them in their process of becoming;
- In 1.5. I described football and the event of the World Cup, some of its meaning among the Brazilian society, in the reality of São Paulo and in the lives of people, and I explained why I chose to undertake this research during this specific period;
- In chapter 2, I will get closer to the actors of the study, giving my anthropological and subjective perspective about them, in order for the reader to familiarize with them and their specific reality;
- In chapter 3, I will describe the methods and the tools I used, as the process I passed through during this period of study. As mentioned, this chapter has a quite important weight in my study;
- In the following chapter 4, I will concentrate in the theoretical framework, that oriented my reflections and interpretations;
- In chapter 5, I will go into the core of my analysis, describing the actors’ narratives of self in FB, their visual identity and their performance in front of the camera. I will describe their visual consciousness and control of performance;
- In chapter 6 I will explain some of the anthropological insights in the film by describing the salient scenes;
- In chapter 7, on the base of the analyses of the previous chapters, I will reflect over the idea of dreaming and becoming in the context in which the actors are placed. My intention is to interpret if and how their narratives of self online influence their becoming in the society.

2) The actors of the study seen from a subjective anthropological perspective

2.1 Fabio and his struggles to become an independent artist

Fabio is a young Paulistano (25 years old) that works as a photo editor. He lives with his girlfriend Ana Carolina (Carol) in a flat in “Bairro Liberdade”, a neighborhood in the center of the city and he comes from a peripheral neighborhood of Santos, in the coast. His passion is art, and he runs his own atelier just on the side of the flat with Carol and a friend, Kym: they paint and do different art works with various materials. They are part of a network of
independent artists composed of different painters, sculptors, writers, graffiti painters, tattoo makers etc.

Fabio comes from a difficult personal and economical condition, he moved to SP after his mother died, his father lost the ability of sustaining him. After years of struggle and efforts, he achieved a stable position in the center of the city with Carol: in this journey he passed through a social mobility and he reached an emotional stability.

During his formation, he studied art at the University but he couldn’t complete his studies, because of his economical situation. The new possibilities provided by the stable economy of Brazil together with his motivation to achieve a social redemption, made his social mobility possible. Through this path, he had different occupations, related with photo editing, graphic design, music and e-commerce; on the side of his work, he always painted and earned some extra money by selling his paintings.

Since he was very young, the social media has been an important part of his sociality. It was a way for him a way to make new friends (he met Carol in FB) and to encounter people that shared his passion for art and music. He first became online friend of many among the network of independent artists that he is now socially part of.

Fabio has the possibility of having a good career in his work, but he wants to make art his main occupation. “Eu só quero pintar”, “I just want to paint”, he said during some of the film shooting: that's his dream and aspiration and where he concentrates his biggest efforts. He finds his actual work as a photo editor monotonous, but he is conscious of the importance of it, of the fact that it pays his bills, and it assures him stability. In fact, he can't yet sustain his life with the money he earns by selling his paintings, but he is trying to succeed in it, with enthusiasm, energy and some difficulties. In order to be able to live out of art, Fabio and his artists-friends need a bigger audience for their works; they need customers, people that acknowledge them as artists, that are interested in their artworks and are willing to buy their artwork. One important occupation for him now, apart from that of photo editor and painter in this sense, is to be an art promoter; together with Carol and Kym, he organizes bazars of art in different locations. During the bazars, Fabio and the other artists sell their work to those interested in their art and, by organizing the art bazars, he builds audiences for himself and his partners-friends. He is investing in human capital; he creates community around himself and the atelier.

In order to promote art and organize the bazars, he created a project and FB page called Avesso https://www.facebook.com/avessoart where he presents the work of different friends-artists, he shares art references and creates events. His project comprehends a community of
artist and is active both online and offline: e.g. during the bazars, in art exhibitions, and daily in the atelier, where some of the artists that are part of Avesso paint, discuss, sculpt etc. Here is the translated description of the FB page: “Avesso is a project created to be a bridge between the artist and the interested in art”.

The bazar and community, are central in his life and they are *loci* of change, places where his dreams, his ideas about himself, i.e. what he is becoming and what he wants to be are at stake. The bazar is where he measures himself, his ability, he acquires knowledge, builds audience, community and he tests the consistency of it: i.e. he can measure the interest people have in what he does by seeing how many persons show up and participate in the bazar, as well as how many buy his and others’ artworks. In the bazar he can perform his strongest positions within his art community: the artist and the art promoter.

In his process of becoming, FB as the other social media, can be central tools:

a) they can help him to expand his network within the art world;

b) they can help him to promote and commercialize his artwork;

c) they can help him to aggregate people around the bazar, create community around Avesso;

d) they make his art and his work visible.

When reflecting over São Paulo, its art world and the art business, Fabio criticizes the idea of having to be someone; people's need of becoming someone known, a public figure in the art world and within social media. He says: “In SP everybody need to be someone, to be better than all the rest. I think that's what sometimes the internet brings to people, this system of comparison: that guy is, that one not, the measuring of ourselves from the “likes”, Facebook”. According to his point of view, the idea of having to be someone surrounds people not just in the art world but in SP in general. He is trapped around the potential that social media has to make him known and achieve the audience he needs to live out of his art, and his criticism toward the system of appearance that it entails. He finds it obsessive, displaying symptoms of lack of depth, he criticizes the narcissism of the art world, and instead he sees art as engagement in the community that the artist belongs to.

Fabio's aim with the bazar is to build human capital, to construct community around himself and the other artists in order to meet people interested in what they do, so he uses Facebook as a tool to aggregate and to promote artists and their artworks. When talking about realizing himself, he uses the world “respect”. To gain respect, for him means achieving the appreciation and the consideration within the art community (for “the art community here” I refer mainly to the independent one that he belongs to but also to a broader one of SP). Respect is one of the measures of his self realization and something he is building day by day.
within his community. In his opinion, you gain respect by doing something for the people you have around, the community you are surrounded with, he believes everyone has that responsibility in the society. Respect means for him caring about your community, doing things for it and building relationships around himself. He doesn’t gain respect from the likes in Facebook, or the popularity, by becoming known, by being someone.

“Being someone. I don’t care if you are Caetano Veloso, Dilma, or anyone else, what did you do for the people that are around you, what did you build? It doesn’t matter who you are, what matters is what you do for the people that are around you, I think that everyone has a responsibility in the society, you know?”

The respect Fabio talks about is directly linked to the community of artists he belongs to, the idea of taking care of each other, the brotherhood among the artists, the creative exchanges: the main relevant audience that Fabio wants to impress in his performances and with Avesso, is his community of artist friends itself (his audience is particular).

Art to Fabio means also resistance toward the art world status quo, the discourse about what art is, what is beautiful, what is clean or dirty, what is prominent or marginal, what is attractive etc. ... In his social-anarchic political ideas and the rejection of the idea of dominant aesthetic canons, I see a connection with “the independents”, a group of marginal artists that during the “Abertura period”8, were opposing “... those who want to impose an aesthetic-ideological model on everyone”. That imposition during the military regime, the aesthetic canon, the nostalgia “for classical architecture, the numeric and perfect order” (Aldana, 2013, 230), the obsession for purity and rational shapes. The expression of Fabio and his art community digs into this and other art heritages, and in this sense, it is not a mere coincidence his first exhibition was named “repulsa”, or “repulsion”: in which he used the contaminated, discarded material from the street as a support for his art work.

Since the art galleries according to him, get most of the profits from the sell of an artwork and are little interested in his and his friends' artworks, Fabio decided to “cut out” the art business intermediation (by becoming a mediator himself), trying to develop an direct relationship between the artist and their potential audience. In this context, I see another link between the artists of Avesso and “the independents”, that were frustrated because they couldn't get recognized for their work within the traditional art circuit and “took to streets to create projects that frequently and intentionally defied easy categorization and sought a more

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7 Sentence from Fabio’s interview;
8 Abertura (opening) was a period of gradual and mild democratic concessions that the Brazilian dictatorship started to grant in the country from 1974;
direct unmediated relationship with their potential audience.” (Aldana, 2013, 231)

Fabio is uncertain about his role as an art promoter, concerned about what others in his art community think about it, he says: “Some people think that I am earning something from it, that I make money, others asked me to do this as a real job. I like it, but more for the exchange, for what can happen and what can come out of it, I don't want to get rich or anything”. On the one side, he is respected by the art community around him for his effort, his engagement in creating a space for all of them, and yet on the other he is suspected by some of getting advantages from the sell. He is accepted and respected as an artist by his friends, but the extra role of being an art promoter, provokes some skepticism and jealousy among some. They start to locate him in a grey, ambiguous area between that of the artist and the art seller, who is often accused by the independent artists of e.g. exploiting the artists by keeping most of the profits. The idea of art promoter, is connected with the clique of bourgeoisie and doesn’t fit well with that of independent artist, which is linked to the periphery, the idea of the parable of an emerging creative.

By organizing the bazar Fabio acquires power: he defines by whom the Avesso community is composed, he chooses whom to invite, he and Carol can open or close the door of the community, of its audience of buyers to the artists. Another means to get an audience for his and his artist friends' artwork apart from the Bazar is the self production of printed publications that makes their art circulate, be seen, and it allows them to give feedback to each others; in fact the artists friends are the first and main audience of each others' artwork. Fabio is engaged and engages in collaborations with different art friends, like in the case of this film-research that I proposed he to be a part of: the film is for him a way of collaborating, of documenting, of preserving the memory of the bazar events and the artworks he and his friends produce and also a way to get self-promotion.

The network he belongs to and that he is developing, is heterogeneous and it is composed by independent artists (the core of Avesso), people working within the social media publicity environment (mainly Carol's network), some of the friends of each of the exhibiting artist and the followers of the artists' page, who might participate in the bazar (which is open to the public), all of which can buy and become new friends.

In the relationship between Fabio and Carol, Fabio is not the provider, the breadwinner, like men were traditionally and often still are in Brazil, but he adds a dimension of creativity and self expression to the couple, something that fascinates Carol: he helps her to develop her interest in art and encourages her need to be creative out of her working environment, out of the commercial logic of publicity.
2.2 Carol, an emerging professional in the social media world of São Paulo

Carol is a young professional (27 years old) from São Paulo, she lives together with Fabio in Liberdade. She holds an important position as a social media expert in FIESP (the federation of industries of São Paulo State), in Avenida Paulista, the most central street of the city and she is passionate about art. In both her work and leisure time, Carol is extremely active online: “My life is always online” she says, she is very advanced in the use of social media and she shares a big part of her public and private life online, from the morning until the night. She met most of her friends and Fabio online, as a friend of common friends, via FB and the other social media.

Carol is a part of a network referred by Sarah (who is part of it too, so this is an emic expression) as “the influential people in the net” in SP and Brazil, that comprises different public online figures, bloggers with different interests and aims: some working in the social media, some in TV channels, some are artists, etc. Carol uses the net in order to share her ideas and thoughts, she shares both light videos about pets as well as her feminist perspectives about the role of women in contemporary Brazil.

She comes from a poor neighborhood of SP, the East Zone, and now lives and works in the center. In her social mobility, her journey from the periphery to the center, she grasped all the opportunities encountered in the social media world, with dynamism and stubbornness. She is also a self-taught person, she learned her profession by herself: after years of experiencing the world of social media independently and different job experiences, she achieved the position she holds now.

Here I will explain how she emerged in the society by acquiring audience online:

a) While she was studying psychology at the University (thanks to a governmental program), she began to be more interested in social media than in psychology and spent more time in the informatics rooms than in the classes. During this period, she started to approach the language and mechanisms of social media.

b) She participated and won a beauty competition, called “Lingerie Day”. Thanks to that, she started to acquire her first consistent number of online followers and she got introduced into the social reality of the bloggers’ world.

c) By becoming known online, she started to be part of the online influencers world, first
just online, but later also offline: in fact, different brands started to contact her and invited her to different social events, where she met other popular people of the net.

During this period she also started to understand how to handle a large number of followers online, and became more active online, developing narrative about herself and her lifestyle. She started to establish many friendships with different popular people in the net.

d) By becoming friends with people that where known online, she developed alliances that through their online interaction, helped her to acquire a greater audience, increasing her influence online. Hence, she started to be invited to most of the social events organized for the online influencers in SP, and she became friend with many of them. In doing so, she made friendships among people that belonged to the social media business and she started to work for different publicity agencies that were interested in the influencers’ ability and power to engage an audience online. Most of the bloggers among her friends, are in fact working within the publicity world, a huge sector in the economy of SP.

e) She suffered a very serious accident, that almost paralyzed her and while in the hospital for months, she continued to be very active online, gathering a large number of new followers enthused by reading and seeing her self narrative, her story online. After she finally recovered from the accident, her popularity was further increased and established.

Carol grasped the different opportunities that her life offered her and took advantage of them in order to climb up: the possibility of using internet at the University, the first popularity derived from the beauty contest, the chance to understand the handling of thousands of followers, the opening of the online influencers’ world and the derived entrance in the social media and publicity world, even her accident became an opportunity - telling her story while she was at the hospital, she became very popular online, much more than she already was.

In the online activity of Carol, the distinction between backstage and front stage becomes blurred, this dichotomy gets grey as does the space for interaction allowed among “Facebook friends”. In fact, the space created by FB allows a close and yet distant interaction between people (users) in which the typical notion of friendship as \( \text{vis à vis} \) relationship shifts: Carol can communicate and share a big part of what we are used to refer to as private life with thousands of users.

As Uominen reminded:

“Facebook thus tends to bridge both public and private types of photograph albums, the technological interface encouraging users to share the front regions as well as back regions of their social lives. This blurring of boundaries does not mean, however, that boundaries cease
to be meaningful, since the “virtual” is not synonymous with the “actual” (cf. Boellstorff 2008).” (Uominen, 2013, 129)

In that way FB allows her to efficiently administer the interaction with a much greater number of people than she would be possibly able to do in her social reality.

Within the independent art community that gravitates around Avesso, Fabio has the status of promoter and of a respected growing artist; Carol has the same statuses, but she participates in Avesso in a less active way, she is less engaged in this network, but still an active player. Within the network of influential people of the net, Carol is prominent and admired. First because she has many followers, and second because she is a close friend of and is followed by many of the other popular people of the net in; when they comment or share her posts, her audience multiplies amplified by their interaction. Fabio is the boyfriend of Carol and he has many friends inside this network, but he doesn't participate to the same degree in the social media life, as early described, he is more ambiguous towards it.

Art for her is a passion, and she confessed that she always wanted to study it, but she didn't have the opportunity. She often paints and collaborates in the atelier, mainly making drawings and illustrations, but is quite tired when she comes back home in the evening, so she wants to relax. Her home is very important in her life, she refers to it as her sanctuary. She supports Fabio both economically by paying a bigger part of the atelier and of the house rent (since she has a higher income than him) and morally, in his wish of becoming an independent artist.

The atelier and the bazars and offline-online Avesso community, play an important part in their relationship: the atelier is the laboratory in which memories (Fabio and Carol are collecting old paintings, photos and old diaries that are used in different art collages), colors, forms and ideas are elaborated, created. Avesso as a project, is a central locus where their ideas, dreams about their life together and their identities are being projected and tested out within their audiences (both online and offline). In the atelier as a space, Fabio sees a possibility in creating art and living out of art, by making Avesso bazars; Carol on the other side, gets encouraged by Fabio to make art and express herself, for her it is a colorful place where she can be creative without constraints and fines; he catalyzes her inner self expression, she helps Carol to discover he inner beauty.

In my interpretation, I see the atelier, the terrace and their house, as a kind of colorful oasis where they can breathe (like Fabio said in an interview): a creative and safe space within the grey jungle of concrete where they can rest from the fast and stressful rhythm of the megalopolis. Carol’s point of view of SP is rather different than mine here, she says that when she looks at it, she sees herself; she identifies with the fast changing dynamism of the city,
like SP she is running toward the future. She doesn't feel it is aggressive, or at least she doesn't want to represent it like that in her self-narrative; she is a native *Paulistana*, a conqueror, SP is her habitat.

In their idea of a relationship, having kids together and becoming a family is very central for both - it is part of their dreams, their idea of self-realization. Nevertheless they don’t subordinate it to their individuality, and their profession: Carol is a woman with a career and Fabio will declare both his need for self realization and the wish to have a family to the camera (fig. 20).

### 3) Methods and tools used in this study

The development of the fieldwork suggested me the use of different visual methods and tools in order to approach the fluid and elusive complexity of the urban social reality in which Carol and Fabio are immersed. Each of them contributed in different ways, to the investigation of the actors’ daily life. The overall process, defined and shaped the final research’s aims: the interpretation of their visual narratives and their emerging strategies.

#### 3.1 Reflexivity: about the idea of doing anthropology at “home” or “elsewhere”

When doing anthropology in São Paulo, as I anticipated in the introduction, because of the similarities between this city and Italian ones, I started to reflect over the idea of “home”, and of doing anthropology at home. In a context of fluidity, modern nomadism and continuous acculturation, like the one I have been immersed in for various years, home can in different ways, be Tromsø, São Paulo, Copenhagen, Genova, Utrecht, Trento etc., and yet what is/ are home (s)?

Somehow when I arrived in São Paulo I felt more at home than in Copenhagen, but at the same time, in São Paulo I felt distant from home, both because SP is still very different from the Italian cities I lived in, but also because Copenhagen had from the previous years, become my home. That's a result of the construction of the hybridization of my identity, because those “abroad(s)” or elsewhere(s) from the original “real home” become the normal condition, i.e. new home(s), different from the old one(s), but still home(s).

Home can also be understood as a specific context in one society or another in which one shares contents, ideas and ways of understanding reality. In that sense, the actors of the film soon made me feel at home; what we shared was not the place of origin, other belongings
were at stake. We shared ideas, values, the ideals that move us, a very similar way of understanding the reality around us: I was easily integrated into their circle of friends and network, also because e.g. they tend as I do, to be left wing oriented, cultural relativist and democratic.

Reflecting over my fieldwork, I found what Strathern argues to be quite relevant: "Whether anthropologists are at home qua anthropologists, is not to be decided by whether they call themselves Malay, belong to the Travellers or have been born in Essex; it is decided by the relationship between their techniques of organizing knowledge and how people organize knowledge about themselves” (1987, p. 31)

The techniques I used to organize knowledge about them (the video camera as a research tool to study their visual identity) and the way they organize knowledge about themselves (their use of cameras and pictures to negotiate their visual identities online) are very akin, as our understanding of them stands. For example, during the video elicitation process, Carol and Fabio discussed the camera styles I used in the filming, defining them “the observational and the participant”: they had very similar categories of understanding the whole process to mine when I approached the study of their daily lives anthropologically. Therefore, my voice becomes a perspective among theirs, because we are equipped with similar intellectual tools and we have similar backgrounds. My aim in this research consequently has been to dialogue with them, to convey their voices and participate with my interpretations.

During the fieldwork, I soon became integrated into the community of independent artists who were gravitating around Avesso, Fabio introduced me to them as a friend of his, a documentary filmmaker who was going to film him, Carol and the artists around the atelier. Therefore his friends started to treat me as one of them: I was collaborating like them in one of the different creative projects around the atelier and Avesso. Among the other community, that of the influential people of the net, my position was somehow similar to that of Fabio, I was a friend but before that, I was included as the husband of Sarah, who is also popular online and is part of the same network.

By becoming an insider in the independent art community, I started to analyze the point of view of Fabio and his artist friends. Throughout the whole fieldwork I always felt the need to remind myself of the etic, to look at the dynamics and the processes I was witnessing from the outside too, trying to keep a distant perspective and helping myself with some relevant anthropological literature.
3.2 Accessibility when approaching the public and the private: a city of walls?

According to my experience, Paulistanos are (despite the enormous size of the city, its hectic rhythm, traffic, its lack of public meeting places, of security) very open, close, generous, welcoming, even kind to "the others". In fact I experienced São Paulo as a metropolitan giant that welcomes as much as it intimidates; the generosity and general openness of the inhabitants toward the others, coexists with the common fear connected to the dangerousness of the city: the widespread fear of being robbed, mugged or even killed during a robbery and so on. This fear is legitimate, since it derives from a real lack of security, but it is also nourished by a perception that the city inherited from its past, in the late 90's and early 00's, when SP had experienced an alarming increase in the crime rate. The fear, the discourse of crime and its implications, have been widely and deeply analyzed by the known work of Teresa Caldeira (2000) "City of Walls. Crime, Segregation, and Citizenship in São Paulo". The "talk of crime", as described by her work, is still very popular among the public discussions in the city. Despite this, “statistics are underlining a significant drop in the crime and murder rate” (Un-habitat, 2010, 31), from those that characterized SP at the time when Caldeira did her research. This talk and the security issues of the city push people toward a more private and segregated life.

In this sense, I personally experienced a tension between my wish to always be in the street recording all that was happening and the obsessive voices I was hearing and reading around me about the danger of the city, the victims of crime (also among close friends or relatives of Sarah). I therefore felt trapped in a dilemma: I had to take into account the suggestions and point of views of the locals (otherwise, I would have been a foolish and put myself in real danger) but, at the same time, I needed to make my film and research. I felt limited in my social life; my freedom of walking in the street, in the public was limited. When I was in the street, I was often in tension because I always needed to be alert, to evaluate the risks when walking around the city, consider whether to take one street or not, both with and without the camera.

Another problem that occurred, were the rules and security system that São Paulo's center presents. To mention one issue, I didn't have access to film where Carol was working: she asked her superior, but the process in order to obtain the right to film was meant to be impossible. Basically it wasn't sufficient that all the employees agreed and signed that they agreed that I was filming, but every single one had to send a request to the marketing direction (at least that was the explanation of Carol, maybe she was afraid of bothering the
direction) and wait for an authorization, which should then be communicated to me. I also had to be authorized in order to film São Paulo from the top of a skyscraper (Edifício Itália, the “Italy building”).

After these and other experiences and having noticed the daily life of the actors, I realized how public and private spaces in São Paulo are often segregated and divided rigidly. I noticed a very strong tension between the openness of the people and the segregation in which most of them live. One way to concile these two dimensions, is via the communication in social media which helps them to be open, public and connected with others, it preserves and increases their community.

The tension between the public and the private, made me reflect over Carol and Fabio’s lives, over the importance of their house and the atelier: I started to pay more attention to those spaces and interpreted them as shelters in which they can be social, creative, and protected, where they can invite their friends and build their dreams.

I would have liked to follow Carol in her working place, at least without the camera. I didn’t do it because I felt she didn’t want it and I needed to respect her decision. It also felt ethically important to protect her image and therefore to not criticize her working place, even if their privacy restrictions were controversial. I am aware of the importance of her job in her life, especially for her economical security so I absolutely prevented my research from being of any damage to her and her position there.

The limits of accessibility in filming and doing participant observation in the fieldwork made me reflect over the segregation of the lives in the city and further encouraged me to investigate the lives of the actors online too. Online is in fact where Carol (especially) and Fabio spend a long part of her daily life in SP, the social media being central arenas in their social life; to ignore them, would have been a huge limit for my study. Furthermore, it became normal to me to be more online than I was before, in order to meet people, because the group of people I was socializing with in SP (mostly common friends of Sarah, Fabio and Carol) were spending much time online too. Therefore, I started to be more active in my FB and participated in their daily discussions, observing their activity and trying to see how they were using the social media in their daily lives. I also started to observe how they were representing themselves to the others via social media.
3.3 Participant observation with the camera

During the fieldwork, I used participant observation as a method. I was a participant observer with Fabio and Carol in their atelier, my role there was that of one among the creative friends (painters, photographers, graphic designers, writers, video makers, etc.) who was part of the activities of the atelier. I did participant observation by living in São Paulo and experiencing the richness of humanity that the city is composed of on the one side, and the segregation and anxiety deriving from the security that surrounded the actors and myself, on the other.

The use of the camera, my visual approach, made me closer to the artists, they started to consider me one of them, not just because I was engaging in one of the collaborative projects around the atelier and Avesso and I was a friend of Fabio, but also because they saw me as a filmmaker. Most of them work in different ways in fields related to the visual, both in their art activity and in their professions, and some of them are also filmmakers or photographers.

The actors of the research are living in an urban context, a very fluid environment, they are constantly crossing a very large number of social situations and engaging in various activities. Therefore, in my fieldwork, I concentrated on the actors' performances and on the relationships the camera elicited between us. During the interaction between them and me filming, I got even closer to Fabio and Carol and through the trust we developed in our relationship I could have access to their perspectives.

It was my choice, during the whole fieldwork, to give as much space as possible to their voices and their performance. While filming, I limited the interactional approach that I usually have in my social environment and former fieldworks and I became more observational; I felt that as a filming anthropologist it was more appropriate to give them a free stage, to just facilitate their performance when needed. I in fact experienced a slightly different way of conducting fieldwork from my previous experiences, in which I often engaged in very long and interactive conversations. During this fieldwork, I was there more to listen than to make conversations and, by using the camera, I was a facilitator of the actors' performance. Nevertheless in all the different situations while filming, I alternated an observational and an interactional approach. I became more interactive when I was with Fabio and became more observational when I was with Carol. Fabio and Carol had indeed different attitudes in front of the camera, different degrees of being at ease with their visual self-representation.

During the first days of shooting, I began by being very observational with Fabio but I soon realized that the interactional approach was more adapt for us; my silences while shooting
were making him feel embarrassed and he was always searching for eye contact with me while speaking in front of the camera. I understood that he wanted to have closer contact to me while I was filming, he wanted to hear my perspective on his ideas and to engage in conversations, like we used to do in 2013, when we first met. The following establishment of an interactive stage between us, in which I was provoking him with different questions, and dialoguing with him, made him feel more comfortable and it elicited his perspectives, giving me the possibility to approach an inner Fabio and to make a closer portrait of him.

Carol on the other side, was very relaxed while I was filming her in an observational mode. With her, I was asking some questions every now and then, and I let her perform: I didn't want to interrupt her flow, I concentrated on listening to her sentences and on filming her. In her performance to the camera, she was quite skillful, and while being filmed, she wasn't looking embarrassed, on the contrary she was trying to seduce the audience with her performance. On this matter, in the next pages I will, e.g. describe the process of seduction that developed between the actors, the audience and the filmmaker.

3.4 Interaction, empowerment and seduction

In the fieldwork I used the camera as a research tool and I archived the video footage as a source of data; I relied on the performances of the actors and mediated their wish of communicating their ideas with the aims of my study.

The use of the camera (nearly always present during my fieldwork), emerged as a strong catalyzer of performances. Without it, my entire fieldwork, my positions and even the aims of my research, would have been very different. The catalysis of course happens in every anthropological fieldwork which involves the use the camera as a research tool, but this is particularly true in the case of my specific fieldwork: because of the choice of being interactional in the use of it, of communicating my aims to the actors before and while filming, “of always making explicit the mise en scène, the stages that the camera creates” (Møhl, 2011, 230), to the actors in order to empower them.

I indeed considered it ethically central to let my characters choose how to perform and be able to negotiate their front and back stage with me, in order to make them actively participate in their own representation. This was not just an ethical concern, but also a methodological one, since I aimed at developing a relationship and a study based on trust. In this way, I could achieve deeper comprehension and insight over the investigated themes, which are personal.
This choice was for me a strategy to empower them. I tried to negotiate and build with them a declared stage that Møhl refers to in her text:

“the establishment of this tangible space gives the potential collaborators the possibility to move in relation to it… to determine whether they want to contribute to the process of representation and with what, in a kind of fluid process of constant negotiation and emergence”. (Ibidem)

When filming, I was in charge of selecting the angles and the frames, of choosing among the actors' performances: they were performing their idealized self, that I encouraged, that raised as a response of the relationship between us, being partly conscious about our audiences. In this sense as Willerslev argues, there was a process of seduction taking place between us, in the sense that the camera and I (as seducers) started to create an idealized image of the actors (the seduced): “... the success of the seducer rests on his ability to create an image of the seduced – which – however, is not an exact image of how he/she experienced himself/herself, but rather an ideal representation, a fantasy image of what he/she could become.” (Willerslev, 2007, 37)

While the filming was happening, Fabio in particular (but to a certain extend this is also true for Carol) was in a process of becoming. The camera was present, in order to testimony this process and possibly contribute to it, helping to make it happen: it depicted Fabio and encouraged him in his struggle to get more recognized and economically self-sustained as an artist and as an art promoter. The seduction between us lay in the presentation and representation of their idealized self which took place because of the filming, and became stronger because I posted screenshots of the footage with descriptions of them and their activities in the FB page of the film-research https://www.facebook.com/wonderingpeople every 2-3 days. From the page, they could see the progress of the project and they became «more seduced»: in fact, on different occasions they wrote me messages and commented in the page about how they liked the project and the single images.

When looking at the specific case of study, I just partly agree with what Willerslev argues, that the actors “... fall under the power of the seducer...” (Willerslev, 2007, 37) i.e. the filming-researcher, and are victims of his/her orchestrated seduction. The seduction that took place in my fieldwork wasn't omnidirectional, but rather two sided. On the one side, Fabio and Carol fell in fact under the power of the seducer (me as a filmmaker), the power of representing them as a better self/idealized self; nevertheless on the other, I also became
seduced by them and their characters, I was enchanted by their performances, their idealized self. The camera created a special kind of intimacy, a particular place, a stage in which they could perform and I was the first one sitting in the theater seeing their full performance, the first one observing it, and sometimes even being allowed to interact with it. I was the only invited to a premiere of their life and their self-presentation, and in charge of choosing the frames, the angles and of encouraging their performance: a very privileged but demanding, delicate position which required very much trust and feel.

If on the one side, my role was indeed (in line with what Willerslev argues) to «orchestrate» the seduction by trying to create an ideal representation of them, their role was on the other side, to convince their first audience (me), to seduce with their performances. At last, but not at least, our final implicit goal was to convince and seduce our third man, our known and unknown audiences:

- The known audiences for me were: first, the academic community which I belong to, i.e. my colleagues of study at Visual Cultural Studies, the professors, the external examiners of my film-research at the University; second, the people following the FB page of the film-research (composed mainly by some of my online friends, young Brazilians from São Paulo, friends and followers of Sarah, friends and supporters/followers of the actors). The unknown audience was instead composed of a different heterogeneous public within the academic and non-academic environment that would see the film-research and possibly read the thesis.

- The known audiences for the actors are composed of: first, their friends online and offline and their followers online; second, the people following wondering people. Their unknown audience, was first the class of the Master I am studying in Norway and the academic community which I am part of; second, the possible public of the film-research in Brazil, Norway and Europe. In general, the difference between Carol and Fabio, is that Fabio’s central aim is to impress a particular audience, that connected with the independent art scene of SP, while Carol aims to impress a general audience.

Both three of us were quite conscious of our audiences while performing, we shared a common understanding of the mechanisms of their performances and audiences: the actors because of the high presence of social media in their lives, their professions, and me because of my study at Visual Cultural Studies and my job experiences. Together we were aiming at being recognized, there was a transaction taking place between us in which we both gained. The film-research in fact, could lead to a surplus in both parties: on the one side, the actors can get further visibility and the possibility of achieving more recognition, a new status within
their communities of belonging; on the other side, as a filming student I can get visibility and the possibility of achieving a new status within my community of belonging, that of visual anthropologists, and also within the communities of belonging of the actors in Brazil.

The use of the camera and the FB page, the intrinsic seduction elicited by the visual narrative that we were developing and testing on our audiences, started to reveal the centrality of their visual identities in their daily lives.

3.5 The FB page of the project: a research, dissemination and promotional tool

The FB page of the project [https://www.facebook.com/wonderingpeople](https://www.facebook.com/wonderingpeople) was indeed an important tool during my fieldwork: I created the page as soon as I arrived in São Paulo and developed it continually throughout the fieldwork. During the whole process of filming, I posted images of the shooting, my field notes and some of my first interpretations. By doing so, I developed an online visual narrative of the filming fieldwork, in order to:

- observe the reactions of the actors and their communities on my interpretations of their activities and the events in the city;
- get feedback from the actors on the development of the whole film study;
- test people's interest in the film-study and create community around it;
- outline a first narrative that could help me in the consequent development of the film and the text;
- map some of the collected data;
- divulge the first interpretations of my study;
- promote my film and create an audience for it and for my future film-projects.

By seeing the page, Fabio and Carol could check the development of the project. I could then test their appreciation of the representation I was making of them and confront them with my first interpretations of their social realities. In general, my optimistic portrayal of their lives and of the social processes they are part of, is a shared representation: in fact, I chose to portray their lives and conditions with optimism both because that’s my perspective on their conditions but also because that’s their perspective of their own lives too. During the first stages of the filming, Carol and Fabio asked me if the representation of them and SP would be a dark one and they made me understand that they didn’t share that vision, that they wanted to be part of a hopeful portray of them and SP. In that sense, the project and the whole representation is shared, as our intentions to fight against stereotypes, e.g. which depicts SP as the city of crime and social issues. The FB page helped them and me to control their shared
representation, the common meanings and intentions in the project.

My main intention with the page was to divulge my interpretations (in that sense, it worked well, since I figured out that quite some people were actually reading my texts) and to elicit the comments of the communities of Fabio and Carol (this didn’t work as I expected, most of the followers, just read or liked the posts). In fact (as I described in the 3.4) it increasingly became a tool to create more seduction, that further enthused the actors in their performance towards the camera and me in the filming process. Throughout the fieldwork’s duration, the page attracted the attention of some members of Avesso, that started to follow it in response to Fabio's invitation, some of Carol's audience and my Facebook friends. Since the project was beginning to be appreciated by the actors’ audience and mine, the seduction was further catalyzed by it.

By representing Fabio and Carol online, I was promoting them, and in exchange, they started to promote me back, by suggesting their friends to like the FB page of the project. At the center of our transaction there was the common aim for a growing audience and the respect among our communities: I offered a representation of them that they found appealing, that could increase their audience as their respectability among their community, and therefore, they invited their audience inside the page and divulged the project in their communities. From this process I learned that the online representation can be an object of transaction that can create a surplus as the result of the interaction and it has an important value in the social life of the actors.

By developing this page and by observing the reactions of Fabio, Carol and their communities to it, I have been doing online participant observation. I observed the posts and the online activities of Fabio, Carol and their communities of friends, around their art and their lives; I noticed that many were spending quite some time trying to impress their audience with their self narratives and their art works, in general with the visual content they shared. As Fabio and his friends do with their art pages, by representing my work online I was also trying to increase and impress my audience. My aim is as theirs to live out of my passion, to be creative in visual anthropology; the similarity of my aim in life to theirs made us closer.

### 3.6 The selection of the footage: a process of investigation and analysis

After the fieldwork, I selected and organized the footage. During this process, I achieved an overview of the collected material and I began to investigate the performances of the actors in front of the camera.
While screening some part of the footage to the class, during the seminars organized by the Master course, a classmate of mine said that the actors of my material looked “too perfect”, that they were performing “too well”. Initially, I felt threatened and irritated by this hint, because I thought that the truthfulness of the interactively filmed performance of the actors, was and could have been somehow questioned, especially when compared to the alleged authentic performance of the rural actors, filmed in a fly on the wall style by my concerned classmate. I started to fear that the validity of my study could be questioned too, therefore I wanted to prove that their performance was genuine and I spent some time trying to convince my classmates that the people they saw in the screen were the real Fabio and Carol.

After some time, I began to reflect on the idea of performance, on the idea of authenticity. I thought over how Western understanding sees the performance as an enactment which by showing, overshadows the truth, it hiding the real intentions, the real truth that would still lie behind. According to that vision, Carol and Fabio, by performing too well, were hiding their real selves, manipulating the “objective real”, that one can possibly access by filming with a fly on the wall approach. I found this whole idea, misleading, at least in my study, and after thinking over it, I started to reflect on what the performances of the actors could reveal, instead of hiding.

Here I am once again, in line with what Uominen argues:

“As Schieffelin (1998, 202) points out, Western notions of performance tend to presume 'performative illusions' and 'strategic manipulations'. But performance is not by definition illusory, it can in fact reveal something about ourselves that is normally hidden from our view.” (2013, 126)

What the performance revealed was that their narratives of self in front of the camera were in fact somehow controlled, trained. I thought on my strategy of making the actors aware of the Goffmanesque stages with the camera (see subchapter 3.4) and of the actors’ visual professions: both of them were contributing to empowering the actors in their performance, to making them conscious in front of the camera. Nevertheless, there was something more, they were not enough in explaining the “perfection” of their performance.

I reflected more on the situation in which Fabio and Carol live, and what the high presence of social media in their lives could mean, on how social media induced me as it did the people around me to constantly narrate ourselves with images (especially), videos and text, in order to communicate with the others. After reading different lecturers' work, like Uominen (2013),
Papacharissi (2008), Miller (2010) and others, I began to approach the idea of the reflexivity installed by the use of social media and FB in particular. After that, I started to pay more attention to the control and consciousness of their performances in front of the camera and I began to notice some correspondences between their narratives of self in Facebook and that in front of the camera.

In this sense, this period showed me one of the potentials of using the visual gaze and the filming in anthropological research: the process of selection of the footage before editing, allowed me to identify one of the main themes of my study. The part of the footage that I first showed to my colleagues, has been just partly used in my filmic representation, but it has been extremely important in my written analysis (in chapter 5).

During the fieldwork in fact, I thought I was after an interpretation of the visual identity and the “mere” performances of the actors; however just after reflecting over it and analyzing the footage and my empirical data with my supervisor Professor Waage and the other students at VCS, I realized that what I needed to interpret was their performance in front of a camera, given their networks and within a context of large use of social media. Through this approach, I will analyze Fabio’s and Carol’s dilemmas and dynamics in their process of emerging and becoming.

4) Theoretical framework

In her work, Lila Abu-Lughold's proposed the study of “ethnography of the particular” (1991): she suggested “a shift from the general story of culture towards stories of particular individuals and their changing relationships in time and space” (1991, 475). In my study, following her approach, I focused on particular individuals: I analyzed and portrayed the everyday life of the two actors in their local dimensions. In doing so I used photographs and video footage, which hold a unique position in representing the concrete, they are very fruitful tools for making ethnographies of the particular.

As mentioned, in my effort, I intend to contribute in counteracting the process of “othering”, the stereotypical visions of Brazil, the derived objectifications, the alleged immobility, and homogeneity of a people, of a culture. Furthermore, by concentrating on the particular, I can approach the study of some among the external forces and dynamics that the actors are part of, like their involvement in the capitalist economy of the city with its inducted need to
emerge, to succeed. In fact as Abu-Lughold reminds:
“... the effects of extra-local and long-term processes are only manifested locally and specifically, produced in the actions of individuals living their particular lives, inscribed in their bodies and in their words.” (Abu-Lughold, 1991)
By analyzing the actors’ everyday lives, in chapter 5, 6 and 7, I looked at the city as a theater, applying Hannerz’s reading of Goffman’s study of self in the urban (Hannerz, 1980, 202-231): Fabio and Carol perform different roles, according to their audience’s expectation in the different stages, situations in their daily lives. They engage in different activities both offline and online and by participating, they define themselves, to “become” in their society.

As earlier hypothesized, their self-narrating activity online via FB, can be an important tool in their process of becoming, of self-definition. Inspired and guided by the study “Visual identities in Facebook” of Uominen (2013), “The Presentation of Self in the Age of Social Media: Distinguishing Performances and Exhibitions Online” of Hogan (2010) and of course Goffman’s “The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life” (1959), in part a) of chapter 5, I will therefore investigate the visual identities and narrative of self of the actors in FB. In order to do so, I will analyze the narratives of some of the Facebook profile pictures of Fabio and Carol in direct link with their offline social reality, like Uominen did with her research partner Nina:
“The online performance of selfhood is analyzed in the context of offline social and material realities... When Nina performs her cultural identity in Facebook, by visually expressing herself through different profile photographs, she is not engaged in make-believe act but rather the social construction of reality.” (Uominen, 2013, 126)

In part b) of chapter 5, I will analyze the performance of the actors in front of the camera, and I will try to interpret the reflexivity installed by the intense use of social media: the visual consciousness and the control of the visual self, will be discussed in depth referring to specific empirical cases.

When analyzing part of the actors performances, (as anticipated in 3.3) the approach in my analysis is again inspired by the work of Goffman, here described by Hannertz:
“... most of his writing deal with no social setting in particular… Goffman is thus almost always very micro-sociological, concerned with occasions and what happens between individuals in them.” (1980, 204)

Among the findings of the thesis in chapter 7, I will try to demonstrate how the narrative of self-produced in FB can influence the becoming of the actors within their urban contexts. By doing so, I will refer to the idea of management of the branded self, using the work of scholar
Hearn, in its reflections “Meat, Mask, Burden: Probing the contour of the branded self” (2008) and the idea of “Impression management” as described by Goffman (1959): i.e. the ability of influencing others’ perception of us, to perform a coherent play of self, by managing our front and back stage.

5) The visual narrative of self in FB and their performance in front of a camera

The process of organizing and selecting the footage (as mentioned in 3.6), made me reflect on the hypothesis that the actors' ability to narrate their selves, to perform in front of the camera, can be linked to the intense presence of social media in their lives. Here I will try to show how the interactive construction of their visual selves through images, by installing reflexivity, contributes (together with the communication of the mise en scène, see subchapter 3.4) in making them visual conscious, in control of their own performances, and of their narrative of self.

Concretely and briefly, what I am arguing is that, by being in a context of very intense use of social media such as FB, in that “... relationships are increasingly communicated and mediated through images” (Uominen, 2013, 122), the movements, gestures, choice of worlds, of symbols of the actors in front of a camera but also in the daily life, become more trained. Carol and Fabio, are according to this perspective, in control of their narration of self and they are conscious of their audiences when they perform it, because they are confronted with the repetitive, continuous self-mirroring and self-narration which constitutes part of what FB is.

My analysis will be divided in two parts:

a) directly inspired by the research of Uominen on visual identity in Facebook, I will first approach part of the digitally mediated narrative of self performed by the two actors, focusing on their use of the FB profile pictures, considering both what lies within the selected digital frame, i.e. the content, and what is around them, the social context in which the frame need to be located and understood. This analysis will show some of the roles that Fabio and Carol interpret in their social reality.

b) In the second part, I will analyze part of their performance in front of the camera. I will try to interpret how the reflexivity on their visual self, installed by their interactively negotiated online narrative of selfhood, influences their performance, making them conscious and placing them in control. By analyzing their performance in light of the visual reflexivity installed by their online narrative, I intend to establish the base for my consequent
interpretation of how their visual narrative online influences their emergence in society (chapter 7).

5.1 Fabio

a) The digitally mediated narrative of self, performed through his FB profile pictures

In the first picture, Fabio is smiling and shows his hand, thumb up with the tattoo PMA, which stands for positive mental attitude. He wears an “indie” shirt, often used among alternative young people of his age all around the world and he wears a t-shirt that probably is a print of a friend's artwork. He is also wearing a hat in that is written “Chiveta” which is named after and comes from the online fanzine (Chiveta: about independent music and more) and store of a close friend of his, Ricardo Tibiu, who is part of Avesso. By using this picture and the hat in it, he is making an homage to Ricardo, he makes visible his friendship with him, he shows his alliance and promotes his friend’s fanzine. This picture shows part of what Fabio think he is: a young alternative, with a positive attitude towards life. He dresses garments produced by his friends, with impressed symbols of them: his friends are part of who he is, his relationships define him.

In the second picture, we see Fabio’s legs and the concrete floor in his terrace. With this
frame he is portraying himself in his habitat and favorite place, the atelier. On the floor we can see a spray can and some yellow color (in the bottom of the frame), he stepped with his shoes on it. The picture shows him in the middle of his creative process, in contamination with the colors: he and his clothes are immersed in the paintings with their materials, dirtied by the yellow color. The grey of the concrete floor, the omnipresent grey which constitutes the main color of the city, gets contaminated by strong colors, that attack the purity and squared rationality of the buildings’ architecture. Fabio is closely linked to the enormous graffiti scene of the city, which has as a common motto “Fight the grey”, and in general, is in deep conflict with the administration of the city, that covers the artworks of different artists and it is accused of repressing the creativity of street artists. In this picture, he is interpreting the role independent artist immersed in his world, his atelier.

![Fig. 3 “I am my art”](image1) ![Fig. 4 “I am my painting”](image2)

In these frames, (fig. 3 and 4) Fabio communicates again who he is to the others, and what he wants to become, by interpreting his role of artist. For a better understanding, in FB, “The others can be your 'friends', 'friends of friends' or 'everyone', depending on what privacy settings you have selected.” (Uominen, 2013, 124)

By selecting this picture as his profile, he is identifying with his painting and saying to the audience “I am my art and my paintings”. He is divulging his work and he makes it visible to the others. In both the pictures: the t-shirt with his printed painting (fig. 3) and the canvas (fig. 4) he is showing one of his recurrent symbols and themes, the faces in his paintings. He is saying: “Here is my artwork, you can get it, if you wish”, he is promoting his art and branding it. The face is like his logo, his trademark and he reproduces it in stickers that he sells and attaches in the streets in order to communicate with his audience and attract it.

“The material form of the brand as an image, logo or trademark is the first line of any
marketing strategy. The brand or logo, dispersed via a variety of media forms, comes to stand as the face of a corporation, good, or service and functions as a central point of mediation between the brander and consumer. While the object of the logo or trademark was initially intended to guarantee quality, it has now become the sign of a definite type of social identity…” (Hearn, 2008, 199)

Fig. 5 “The office is trapping me”

In this picture, Fabio is representing himself at work in the office. He is dressed in a more sober way with a blue shirt and a black jacket, the colors and canvas aren't surrounding him nor his clothes and he has a resigned expression, which seems to say he doesn’t want to be there, but he has no choice.

With the choice of this picture, he is communicating his frustration about his actual condition, the fact that he needs to be in the office, he needs to have a fixed job and he cannot dedicate 100% of his time to painting or being an art promoter. He is interpreting the role of the office boy, trapped in front in a desk in front of a computer.

b) Performance in front of the camera

When being filmed, Fabio performs his identity to an audience, similarly to how he does in Facebook. He wants to present himself as an independent artist who wants to live off his artwork and needs to work in the office to pay his bills. When he speaks as I said earlier, he addresses mainly Avesso, and the people gravitating around it; that is his central audience,
and the one he wants to impress. The people that belong to this audience and community are also the ones that can better understand his symbols marked on his body (in the tattoos) and present in his clothes - they can recognize them as theirs.

Fig. 6. “PMA from the narrative of self to the camera”  Fig. 7 “My world and my story are here”

During the first day of filming in the fieldwork, I asked Fabio to introduce himself: first, he was a little nervous, but suddenly he turned on his self-narrative. His posture, gestures and worlds while he narrated himself to the camera, then became quite harmonic, controlled. Later, when I showed the footage to the class, as I anticipated in 3.6, that harmony and control, prompted a classmate of mine say that Fabio and Carol were too perfect, they were performing too well. In fact, while performing in front of the camera, Fabio was in control of his self-narrative, conscious of his visual self, and therefore harmonic, because he performed and negotiated his self-narrative and visual self on a daily basis in his online interactions, especially through FB, with his audience, his network of friends and followers. Fig. 6, shows a screenshot among one of the clips I presented to my classmates during the seminar. Like he did in the case of fig. 1, when he used the tattoo in his hand as a signifier of his identity, in this clip, while narrating himself to me and to the camera, Fabio chose to use that particular symbol. He explained the reference to PMA, positive mental attitude, a song of the hardcore punk pioneer band Bad Brains and he communicated the meaning the tattoo has for him: “PMA is like a mantra in my life, I wanted this tattoo just because of that, because our life sometimes is so hard that we need something to put it down and this helps me very much”.

The PMA tattoo is a way for him to present to the others his approach to the world, his optimism and hope, and it’s a sign that shows his belonging to the hardcore punk scene (in fact he played in different bands in Santos, the coast, where he comes from). This as other
symbols, are part of a sign inventory, used daily by Fabio to communicate his belongings to different social fields.

After a first introduction, he took me (and the audience) inside the atelier (fig. 7). As soon as we entered it, he said: “The atelier is the reward to all the difficulties I passed through when moving to São Paulo”. He adjusted his hat by pulling it up, his face was oriented upwards, he was proud but humble. He identifies with the atelier and the life he achieved after years of struggles. The atelier is his “real world”, the place where he can be himself, the one that he thinks he really is and he could be: an artist. With his sentence he communicated his pride, the harshness of his path up until that point and he hinted at his poor origin. He was indirectly addressing part of the audience that he wanted to seduce, i.e. that of his friends and followers in the art world he is part of. In particular, his main audience was composed by those among the art world that like him come from the periphery or are still there, he meant: “Here I am bro, privileged, but it wasn’t easy to get there.”

In this clip, by telling us the story behind his atelier, he uses the atelier as a sign, a space that signifies him. By using it he is performing the role of artist, like he did in FB in the case of fig. 2. We can notice again Fabio’s controlled performance and conscious choices of worlds in relation to the different scenarios.

![Fig 8. Fabio's board in the atelier](image)

![Fig 9. Carol's board in the atelier](image)

Continuing his narrative, he explained the atelier's division (Fig 8 and 9):

”By looking at the different tables and the art work one can see the profile of each of the persons that are working there. Art is totally what you are”. With this sentence, he directly and explicitly identifies himself and the others with their space in the atelier. He is saying, like in figure 2: “This is my world” and “My world is me”.

The space of Fabio is the most chaotic and colored: he has canvas with strong colors, the computer, some clay, cigarettes, old diaries and drawings; the board itself is dark, sketched
here and there, it has some cutting marks from a chisel and there are some pieces of clay. By looking at his space, one can guess rightly that he spends more time than the others (Carol and their friend Kym) in the atelier. His space look is a chaotic laboratory of colors, ideas and memories. With his sentence he is implicitly saying: “I am creative, I do it my way, I make dirt, I sketch, I paint, I create, I need to express myself in order to be myself”.

In fig. 9 we see Carol’s board: it is more ordered and clean than Fabio’s, the colors are inside their boxes, there are sheets on the side in some containers, and there are some of her illustrations on the side. The desk is white and clean, it looks more like an office desk than Fabio’s. It is the place where she expresses herself in her free time, when she is relaxed, she doesn’t see her professional future there, like Fabio does.

The visual reflexivity in this clip lies in Fabio’s understanding of the process of exploring the atelier of the audience through my camera: with his sentence he suggests me (in my use of the camera) and the audience, to pay attention to his tables and his art work, in order to understand who he really is. By saying this he wants to show us what he wants to become, what he could be, in the same way as he did in his narration of self in Facebook.

5.2 Carol

a) The digitally mediated narrative of self performed through her FB profile pictures.

Fig. 10: “I am a young woman in career”

Fig. 11: “Me in my thoughts in the atelier”

In the first chosen profile picture, Fig. 10, Carol shows herself in the office, in the description of the picture she writes “euzinha aqui na firma cry enemies” or “me in the company, cry enemies”, she presents herself proud at work, and in great shape. She hints a smile and she
looks secure, her hair are combed, she is dressed in an elegant and sober way, like a successful woman, with an important job. Her role is that of a young woman in career, that fought and achieved what she wanted.

In the following picture (fig.11), she shows a different self, she is in the atelier (we can see the paintings of Fabio in the background) her eyes are closed and her hair are covering part of her face, she is reflecting or feeling something, immersed in her thoughts, she wears informal clothes, a t-shirt. The atelier is a place where she expresses herself, she paints, makes illustrations and gets inspired. Fabio incentives her passion and interest: he is behind this passion of her, like the paintings in the wall, on the background of the picture. She is here interpreting the role of the inspired artist in her creative world.

In the next picture (fig. 12), she shows an image of herself made by a friend and artist, the illustrator Izumi Sanma. Her friend made a portrait of her, and she used it as a profile picture to thank her friend, to promote him and to show her friendship and alliance with him (like in the case of Fabio with his friend Ricardo in fig. 1). The picture shows her in one of her favorite time of the day, when back from work, she can enjoy her free time, relaxing with her cats at home.

In fig. 13, she shows herself in classic “wayfarer” sunglasses, she dresses a black and white garment and her hair are pulled back. The glasses, the dress and the hair are signifiers of her identity, they are part of her inventory of signs, that she uses as Fabio did (fig. 3, 4 &6). Her role is that of the young intellectual woman: she is elegant, classic, vaguely distant in her expression.
One FB friend teases her, commenting: “art critic mode: on” and he gets the most likes for his comment. Here we see an example on how FB can be a construction site for building the visual identity: she uploads her picture and gets feedbacks on it, she interactively constructs her identity in relation with the comments of her friends and followers. With the picture, she is showing one of her multiple identities, that of her intellectual self, she is testing it to the audience and gets acceptance (or not). By measuring the likes, and interpreting the comments, she can see what of her visual selves the audience finds more appealing, and what the audience recognizes as her. Afterwards, she can use that data, the acquired consciousness of her visual self, in order to present her most appealing selves in her offline social life and to impress her audience in different social situations.

During the interviews, she told me she was always passionate for art, but she could never study it. In her free time, she is exploring the art world, both by making artwork, illustrations and by reading about references, going to exhibitions and concerts. In picture 13, in that sense, she shows both “who she is and who she thinks she could be: she performs and tests her envisaged self” (paraphrased from Uominen, 2013, 128), like Fabio did.

“In selecting what photographs to display, Facebook users engage in a reflexive process whereby they portray certain aspects of selfhood, while ignoring or concealing others. This process can be read as impression management, with the “performed self” quite literally communicated as an ‘image’ (Goffman, 1959, 244-5)” (Idem, 126)

By selecting a picture and using it as her profile picture, Carol is “validating her identity, showing who she is” (paraphrased from Uominen, 124), she is offering an objectified version of self, and some of her different sides.

b) Performance in front of the camera

Carol described herself as a young professional that made it, a woman that arrived where she wanted, that works where she always wanted to (in the Avenida Paulista) and lives where she always wanted to live (in the Liberdade neighborhood). Like in fig. 10, in her performance to the camera, she presented herself as a successful woman that fought to achieve what she got.
Fig. 14 conscious of gestures, of words

Fig. 15 Carol adjusts her hair

Fig. 14 shows part of the video elicitation process: Carol said that during the interviews, she knew what to say (she referred to her self-narrative as “my talk”) and that she was trying to keep the best angles to the camera: while saying this, she twists her head (as we can see in the picture), miming her movements and posture during the shooting. Her self-narration to the camera, resembles closely that she developed in FB, and so her postures do: by taking hundreds of picture of herself with her smartphone, and developing her narrative online, she learned e.g. her visual appearance, and what angles are more or less appealing to a camera (in fact, in her FB profile pictures, at fig. 10 and 13, we see how she twists her head too, in order to show her best angle), therefore while being filmed, she tried to keep the best angles too.

From the video elicitation process, I can see once more how Carol’s performance was conscious, trained. In fig.15, I asked them how she and Fabio felt during the process of filming: Fabio said that after the first period of difficulty, things went very good, Carol said that she felt comfortable from the beginning. After, I asked her if in that moment she was feeling more comfortable than the first days of the filming. As soon as I reminded her that we are filming now too, she took a break of a few seconds, adjusted her hair and then she started to speak: her words became suddenly set, she tuned again on her “talk”.

Later, she told me that in some situations when the camera was observational she forgot about the presence of the camera, like when she was walking in the city, in her way to her job (fig. 21). In those situations, her control in front of the camera, was interrupted, because she wasn’t conscious of the filming.
In Fig. 16, in her way down with the elevator, after she prepared to go to work, she takes a selfie (a picture of herself taken with her smartphone): that is the first picture of dozens she will take during the day. By taking dozens of pictures of herself with the cellphone during the day, she is making a resumed photographic storyboard of the “film of her day”. Every time she takes a picture (or a series, from what she will choose her favorite), she selects if she wants to post a frame from that “scene”, if she wants to use it to represent herself and her story of that particular day. In this process, she gets more visually conscious, aware of the narrative of her daily life, and that helps her to perform in front of the camera (that is portraying her daily life too).

In fig. 17, before living her house to work, Carol suddenly stopped in her way out, she turned to the camera and yawned without looking embarrassed: she knew that clip could be used to visually tell the story of her early morning. In fact she did something very similar to what she normally does done with her cellphone when she makes her “storyboard”, she stopped in front of the camera, to let me film the moment, living me the possibility to use it in my film of her daily life (as in fact I did). This is also an example of how the filmic portray was the result of a negotiation: because of the visual consciousness of the actors, their reflexivity while being filmed, the representation becomes more negotiated, shared, the actors were empowered in the choice of what to show to the camera.

6) Anthropological insights in the most salient situations chosen in the film

In the film, I chose to show what I thought were some of the most important situations that I
filmed during my fieldwork. My idea, was first to portray Fabio and Carol as individuals, and afterwards together, in order to underline the difference in their personalities, their individualism but also their relationship. In this way, the film resembles how their daily life develops in their social world, how they pass their mornings in different places and with different goals and aspirations, and how they meet in the evenings, in their common world, their house and atelier. By selecting the situations and the sentences from the interviews, I chose to give also space to those in which their control over their performance was interrupted, I found them very rich with information. In this chapter, I will describe the visual-anthropological insights in some of the most salient scenes and situations in the film: their emic ideas of becoming in the city and in their lives and my interpretations of them. In the legends of the screenshots I will refer to the time code where the scene starts, in order to easily see the scenes that I refer to in the film. The actors’ adaptation to life and process of becoming can be meaningfully analyzed with metaphors from the world of football.

In the scene of fig. 18, Carol is sitting on the terrace of her house. She choses that location in order to narrate herself to the camera, she decides to have the city as her background. In the scene, she describes her way of seeing São Paulo: she says that she feels part of a young generation of people who are running to get something in their lives: she sees herself as an active part of São Paulo's energy and rush. She is an attacker, she runs after chances, after goals in her life. She is also a big fan of the city itself, she chooses the terrace of the house and atelier as the place to be interviewed: the terrace in football is the place where often ultras stay, a place made of concrete steps without seats and closer to the field. Carol places herself there, with the city close to her, on her back, the theater and field of the games of her life.
This clip is the second of the film, it is the opening sentence of the film, that establishes the theme: with this sentence, Carol underlines the dynamism and competition in her life and in the city. Here the stereotype of the alleged laziness of Brazilians is counteracted by her voice, her story: she is a runner, and she is presenting us her city, her and Fabio’s involvement in the city’s rush, in their careers.

The context in which the story is placed is outside of the stereotypes which tend to see Brazil as the country of beaches, of uncontrolled hedonism, of the eternal carnival. There are no beaches in SP, but skyscrapers, streets, some (few) parks luckily, cars and many people running after dreams, opportunities in a suffocating rhythm. The game is played in an immense theater or field, which doesn’t resembles the ideas of primitivity or sensuality, commonplace in the perception of Brazil: on the contrary, SP is the theater of Brazilian modernity, a hopeful and often cruel modernity.

In the next frame, fig. 19, Fabio is leaving his house towards his workplace. He is one of those who Carol refers to in the first clip when talking about the rush and energy of SP, she says that it is “especially for whom is young and trying to find something in life”. Fabio says: “I know where I will arrive, I just don't know how to”. With his choice of worlds and the firm tone of his voice he wants to communicate his determination: he is exploring, looking for ways to achieve his goals in the jungle of concrete, meanings and opportunities of SP.

![Fig 20 00:01:35:07 Fabio in the Metro](image1)

![Fig 21 00:02:05:10 Carol and the internet in her life](image2)

In picture 20, we see Fabio standing in the metro looking in front. His voice says: ”I want to have a family but I wants that all my life goes forward”, these words reveal something central about his idea of “becoming”: he embraces the idea of a family, but he doesn't subordinate his own individuality and self realization to it. His sentence tells us something about the social reality of both Fabio and Carol: they both combine an intense sociality (with close ties with
their family members and various close friends), with a marked individualism. In Fabio and Carol’s project of life together, the idea of family is central; they come from difficult family situations and they place very much value on their stable union.

In fig. 21, Carol walks down the stairs, her voice introduces the importance of the internet in her life, how internet is the elected space for her sociality. She says that the internet was her “gateway to the world”; in her view, it permitted her to become who she is.

When she started to use the social media, she started to play, she had her kick off, she started to exist in the field. In fact because of internet, she made new friends, she acquired new competences, she approached a system of meaning and learned a language, that permitted her to move from her previous life in the periphery to her new life in the center. She learned the laws of the game, the rules of relevance in her new game and field, she understood the audience dynamics and popularity mechanism and by training, she learned how to play. She moved from the street game of the periphery to the acclaimed stadium of the center. Her digital inclusion and popularity online, brought opportunities in the offline world that determined her new inclusion in a higher social class. This inclusion made her part of a network of people and new opportunities in the center of the city.

Carol is therefore very optimistic and positive when she looks at the city, the internet and the social media, she sees them as places for opportunities, where she hoped and finally gained a better life.

In fig 22, Fabio is also optimistic, but he is more critical about the internet and the city, he compares them by saying: “The internet is like SP, it's fucking cool, but you need to take care too, keep your feet on the ground”. He shares the vision of Carol, who sees both the city and
the internet as places rich of possibilities, but he also hints at the risks that are present in them. During the whole interview, he talks about the risk of losing contact with reality because of the internet or/and SP: “The internet is the thin line between the coolness and idiocy” he says, and he refers to the possibility of feeling very cool and not realizing if you are instead foolish. In his process of becoming in the city, he wants as he says, “to keep his feet on the ground, take care”, in other words, to remain “himself”. He is reflecting on the risks of the online presentations and popularity (both online and in offline). The risk is of being laughed at, of being passed through his own legs with the ball, the risk of humiliation and embarrassment, of loosing the respect in his community, in his team, Avesso. The net and the city with their opportunities encourage him to aim up, push him to dream, but in his becoming, he wants to be humble and awake.

The next frame, fig. 23 shows his daily life: he is sitting in the metro making drawings, his voice introduces us to the presence and importance of art in his life:

“In my line, the drawing that I make... It is important how I spend my day relating to other people and the way to my work, the stories that I listen in the metro... These are the moments when I say: 'Fuck it! Here I do what I want' “

Fabio grasps any opportunity to get inspired: he uses the time in the metro while going to his work to make drawings of the stories he encounters. The words he uses and the tone of his voice, hint at a passion and a tension, in particular with the last sentence he is implying that there is an obstacle in his life, something he is confronted with: he has some moments when he can be free to do what he wants, but not most of the time - this frustrates him.

I selected this sentence from Fabio, because it is a moment where the harmony in his performance is disturbed: he isn’t at ease with his life and his condition like he normally is. This moment doesn’t fit his front stage: his coherent narration of self that shows him patiently working day after day to gain his life, constructing his path to have a family and become a self-sustained artist (like at fig. 20 & 29). He interrupts the control and his attempt to impress his audience with the general optimism of his self-narrative (see PMA, Fig. 1 & 6), leaving some space to manifest his frustration. By doing so, he shows some of his backstage, a discrepancy appears in his narrative of self: here he is not patient nor at ease, he has a moment of hanger, he manifests his dissatisfaction, he is anxious of becoming.
In fig. 24, the frame depicts an observational situation in which Carol was not conscious of the camera, (as she said to me a minute after that shot). Her expression and the long break she takes to stares at the skyscrapers, are quite meaningful and telling. There Carol is looking at the high skyscrapers of Avenida Paulista: she stares upwards, reflecting, getting prepared for the day to come, and conscious of what she has achieved in her life, by aiming up. She says that the center is the place where she’d always dreamed of living and working. She also says that when she was little, by looking at the skyscrapers when she was visiting the center with her mother, she always saw herself in them. Now she stares at them with pride, they are a symbol of what she achieved, of her path within the society from the periphery to the center, a symbol of her new status in the society. After that reflection, she takes a deep breath, she has a long day of work in front of her ... This long breath also symbolizes the weight and fatigue of the her path until here, it is telling of how hard it was for her to achieve her goals and make this social climbing come true. When she was younger and living in the periphery, she was staring at the center, where the real games were played, she didn’t have the possibility to participate. Now she is playing the real matches, inside the field, she is part of a Golden generation “a group of skillful football players of similar ages who achieved success or are expected to achieve success for their country”\(^{10}\), the young Brazilians who are expected to propel the development of Brazil.

In the next figure 25, we see her twitter's cover image, she says: “The cover image of my twitter is a pop art with written: "OMG, I am so retro", this reminds me that everyday when I am not learning something, I get behind.”

The cover image and what she says, together underline the state of perpetual anxiety that derives from the rough competition in the dynamic city, and within the fast world of social

\(^{10}\) http://dictionary.cambridge.org/it/dizionario/britannico/golden-generation;
media itself, the idea of always needing to keep updated in order to not fall behind, not becoming obsolete. At the same time, they communicate her interest in art, and her fascination for the past, for the vintage, in both the design and in fashion.

To Carol, this type of rush and running of the city is not suffocating, nor aggressive, she looks at the bright side: she is an attacker, who likes to go ahead, she moves with ease in the jungle of concrete, it is her habitat. In the image we can also see the numbers of her activity in twitter, with the tweets number (139 thousands) and her number of followers (41.1 thousand). She is a player on a team of social media experts, and she is also a known blogger, an “influencer”, or a Fans’s favourite: “a player who is very popular with the supporters of a particular team or sport”\(^\text{11}\). Her fans, are her followers online: among them there are some moderate ones and the curva, the “fanatic fans” that always or very often, like, comment or share her content on FB, or in the other social media. They helped and help her in her process of emerging: by acclaiming her online, they attract the attention of the employers within social media, that are looking for online influences, and can open up for new contracts in other publicity agencies.

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\(^\text{11}\) http://dictionary.cambridge.org/it/dizionario/britannico/fan-favorite?q=fan%27s+favourite
conscious of her value. She is a young social media expert, who come from the far and poorest periphery and now works in the most central street of Latin America.

In the second frame, fig. 27, she describes her first job experiences, this situation shows her ability to emerge and to navigate in SP:

“There were days in which I was inside a meeting and I didn't know what I was doing there. I was taking notes of everything the others were saying, I was like...”

She wasn't prepared, she didn't understand nor know what the people were talking about in the meetings, but she didn't give up, nor manifest her lack of knowledge, she pretended to know and found a way to learn, to overtake her gap, she “found the way”. In fact she confessed me that in various job interviews, when she was asked if she knew how to use one program or another, she always said that she did, even if she didn't know, accepting all the challenges of her affirmations and running after the opportunity: the first thing she would have done was to go home and spend the following nights learning the program, filling in her gaps.

In her words, when she describes the situation, I can interpret the so called “jeitinho”, a typical Brazilian way of finding a solution to a problem, of solving, that requires and implies creativity, improvisation, astuteness, and that often bypasses some social conventions and norms. As Barba writes:

“It is called jeitinho this very Brazilian ability, of getting out of difficult situations, to deceive others but without much malice, to have the upper hand on the opponent's turn on the football field”. (2007, 46)

While in the meeting, she wasn’t trained enough, her opponents (the others participating in the meeting) could have tackled her, she was at risk that the impact with them would have put her out of the game, she could have been sentenced incapable to play. Therefore she replied with jeitinho, she avoided the impact with the tacklers by dribbling them, she found her way through them.

In this situation, she describes both the difficulties of achieving her position and how she faced them. She says that she learned her job by doing it, “Aprendi muito na raça”, which in Portuguese literally means “I learned very much in the race”: she learned in the rush, by playing, in the different competitions of SP, by engaging with the city, its rhythm and with the fast development of the social media world. In fact, she didn’t learn her profession through a social media course at University, but through her dynamism, her ability of self-learning and of grasping opportunities: these are characteristics that are typical of the Paulistanos in general.
Fig. 28: “Everyday when I get to my job I need to be better, like in the art, I cannot keep still. If I stay still in the art, nothing will happen, nothing.”

This sentence tells us again something about the suffocating rhythm of the city and the need to be active, an anxiety of going forward, of arriving. Fabio is conscious about this anxiety and he criticizes it during our talk with the camera, but by living in the metropolis, he is also affected by it.

In fig. 29 he says: “And today by being the coordinator of a team, I need to be very focused, I cannot be the kid I was before”. He underlines his growing responsibilities, and the development of his life and career, he describes his role in the company where works. The image shows him as a young man concentrated in his work in the office, after he says he likes his job and he looks comfortable and relaxed. Here is an example of the front stage of Fabio, a performance of a controlled self without discrepancies, where he is in total harmony with his actual life and his choices.

By seeing Fabio and Carol at their work, people of their same age who are living in many Western Countries, or in modern cities, could identify in different ways with them: Fabio and Carol are out of the “exoticism”, of its othering effect, they look similar to “Westerners” in their lineaments, in their jobs, their “seriousness”. They don’t match with the alleged idea of Brazilians as the “unserious” people that live day by day, out of a momentary, ephemeral happiness, without thinking about tomorrow; Fabio and Carol look quite rational, they are building their future and their careers.
Fig. 30, Fabio: “I don't like football, but football is always present in my daily life”

As I described earlier, football in the film-research is one of the echoes of success that surround the actors and people in SP. Furthermore, is the historical context in which the play of the actors is performed, their lives are shown to us. The games of the World Cup are in the film a tempo, a narration that develops on the side of the main thread, that is the actors' lives and struggles. Fabio’s sentence counteracts the superficial and stereotypical idea of Brazil as the country in where everyone is obsessed with football, by showing instead the more nuanced and complex reality in this particular case. Fabio doesn’t like football, but football has meaning in his life, as it has deep meanings in Brazilian society.

Fig. 31, Fabio: “When I look at the city from the top, from the atelier here, it is a moment when I am able to get peace”. Fabio sees the atelier as the place where he can rest from the hectic rhythm of the metropolis, he can breathe, the atelier and their house is their security, where he and Carol build their projects and construct their future, it is the center of his ideas and projects of becoming. The film too starts to rest from his fast rhythm: my intention was to underline how the city and the rhythm of the actors is hectic when they are outside and how in the atelier and home the tempo shifts and different activities can take place.
Dialogue from fig. 32:
Fabio: - “You are very detached bro”
Carol: - ”What?”
Fabio: - ”Thiago...”
Thiago: - ”With life, uh?”
Fabio: - ”He makes a drawing and then he covers it in black”

In this situation, Fabio is analyzing the way in which Thiago paints and he discuss it with him and Carol. Fabio is the one that created the link between them, the center of the situation and he incentives the drawing. By painting Fabio, Carol and Thiago are playing, training their skills, Fabio is inviting Thiago in and Carol to train together, to express themselves, he is catalyzing his and their creativity.

Fig. 33, Fabio: “Honestly, I would like to live painting. Why not? No, I need to commercialize. It is just that I am not good enough to yet.” Fabio tells of what his struggles are, what he wants to achieve and become. Here we can see another moment in which his performance is not controlled. Like it was previously, the coherence of his personal script is somehow compromised, and he shows more of his backstage, his difficulties, frustrations and some insecurity about the quality of his art.

Fig. 34 00:13:36:24 Child with the Brazilian flag
Fig. 35 00:13:43:02 Carol talks about her path

In this shot, in fig. 34 a child in the middle of the protest of the workers without a roof is waving the Brazilian flag, she is confused about what to do with it. She is young, dreaming but perplexed: according to my personal interpretation, in the film she symbolizes a dilemma. On the one side, there are reasons for Brazilians to be very hopeful and positive when looking at the general situation of the country: the emerging middle class is rising (as Carol and Fabio show with their lives), plus the World Cup is taking place at home. Brazilians are applauding
and supporting their National team as their country, celebrating their imagined community, following their visceral passion for football and this positive period of Brazilian history. On the other side, the social problems such as the poverty and inequalities that protesters are fighting against, are still heavily present in the society; they throw some shadows across the whole optimistic picture. The child is uncertain, she looks at the flag with curiosity and confused, “What is there for me, in the future?”

In the next scene, in fig. 35, Carol says: “By leaving the poorest area of the city of SP that is the housing complex of Tirandentes city... I suffered, suffered no, I passed through a social mobility.” She describes her past, saying that she didn’t even have a house, she was always a guest. The situation of her family was nearly the same as that of the workers without a roof, in the protest. When she says “I suffered” and then corrects herself it is a slip that hints at the struggles she had to pass through in her social mobility, in order to be part of the middle class, to gain the better position that she holds now.

Fig. 36 00:15:39:02 Carol about SP and her house

Fig 37 00:16:50:04 being someone in SP

Fig. 36, Carol: “SP is agitated, crazy, in many ways it’s violent, so here is where I feel safe, I feel good... nothing is like our house, nothing, for my life my house is everything”

Carol talks about the city and like Fabio, she opposes the city to her house. She underlines the centrality of it for her life, with her social mobility she gained better income, better future possibilities and also more security, both economical but also from the city's risks.

This scene shows a nuanced reality, the city can be violent, but is not anymore that city of crime and violence described by Caldeira at the end of the 90’s. In the whole film, I intend to give a hopeful, optimistic perspective to the city and the lives of Fabio and Carol, because as I said earlier, that was their point of view on their realities; at the same time, I wanted to balance the overview with some criticism, some doubts in the bright picture, therefore I chose
to insert the protesters, workers without a roof, to remind us that many others haven’t been as lucky as them. The representation is indeed a shared one and the result of a negotiation between the actors and me. By using this clip, I wanted to hint at the lack of security and violence present in the city. By doing so, I gave a limited space to it, in order to limit the space for reifying the idea of SP as the city of violence and Brazil as the most violent nation.

Fig. 37, Fabio: “In SP everybody needs to be someone... this is what sometimes internet brings to people, this system of comparison... and we have this thing in the art, a generation and a group of friends that mirror themselves a lot into the likes and in Facebook.”

Fabio is critical about the appearance and the competition that are present within the art world, in the city, among his generation and his friends; according to his perspective, these dynamics are enhanced by social media. “Being someone” in SP is described by Fabio like this “to arrive in a place and being known, be better than the all the others, be known in the internet”. Fabio criticizes these dynamics but he is also of conscious of being a part of them. He is questioning the obsessive echo of success of the city, he is showing his disapproval for the law of the game in the art world and in the city, and he criticizes social media for inducing more competitiveness. By doing so, he is implicitly criticizing the extreme capitalism of the city.

In Fig. 38, Carol refers to an accident in which she risked loosing her ability to walk, she presents herself as a young woman that doesn't give up in the hardest difficulties, that doesn't surrender, a fighter. When she speaks about the period she passed in the hospital, her tone is calm, she is in control of her performance and her emotions. After this shot, she will stop on a bridge to look at the noisy cars passing by, taking some time to think about what she just said,
and giving us this time too. In her idea of her becoming, her idea of being a fighter, this event is central, it is one of the strongest examples that validates her narrative of self as a strong woman who fights against difficulties and doesn’t give up.

The choice of what to shoot is the result of a negotiation with her. In fact there is no written script, but she knows what I am after when I film her, she is visually conscious, therefore she both facilitates and influences the filming by choosing what she wants to present as herself, when to stop walking and what she says. In some situations, I feel that we nearly share the role of the filmmaker; with her knowledge of the visual, she anticipates the camera movements and sometimes even suggests them.

Fig 39, dialogue:
Carol: - “Do you want to buy something for the garden?
Fabio: - “No, I'll get... Do you have some money?”

This conversation can tell us something about the power relationship between Carol and Fabio, she asks him a question, he is a bit uncomfortable to reply to it, he is without money so he cannot buy the plants. Carol has a higher income than Fabio and contributes more in covering the expenses of both the house and the atelier. She is helping Fabio both with moral and economical support in his intent to live out of his artwork. The power relationship is present here, Carol holds in fact most of the economical resources among the couple, and in various situations Fabio needs to ask her some money. This passage tells us something about Fabio and Carol’s relationship, Carol is in a position of power, she is the one holding the strongest position in the couple.

By showing Carol as an economical independent woman in career, the film and text counteract directly the cliché of Brazil as the violent macho dominated society. Carol and Fabio base part of their relationship on the shared idea of equality of the sexes and on the right for their self-realization and individualism.

Fig 40  00:20:16:06 Fabio talks about a bazar
Fig. 41  00:20:38:02 Carol talks about painting
Fig. 40, Fabio and Carol are preparing an art bazar, Carol says that she is concerned about it, Fabio is too, and he says that is a responsibility. The bazar that they are organizing is a very important event in the relationship of Fabio and Carol. There is a tension in the atelier during the preparation that introduces us as an audience to the centrality of the event. In fact, the atelier’s survival depends also on the sales during the bazar, on its success. Fabio is in charge and secure, Carol is more nervous and tired. They prepare the place and the artwork they want to sell. Fabio is emerging again as the leader in the atelier, he is coordinating the organization of the event, and he is the promoting it in his art Facebook page, Avesso.

In fig. 41, Carol says that she doesn't like to sell and she sees her painting and drawing more as self-expression; she would like to keep her artwork for herself, she doesn't aim at living out of her art. Fabio and Carol's ambitions and aims in the art are different: Fabio is trying to professionalize, to sustain himself with his artwork, therefore he needs to commercialize; Carol sells mainly in order to participate in the bazar. Their different relationships with art explain their different visual identities and FB activities.

Fig. 42 00:22:33:00 Bazar Avesso, 20th of July

In fig. 42, we can see the FB page of the event “Bazar Avesso Rooftop”. When Fabio explains the event, he is taking on the role of the promoter, the manager, he sees the documentary as a form of creative collaboration and promotion for his team and he is presenting to the audience what is going to happen there, he is comfortable in his role.
Community signifiers of Avesso during the bazar

Fig. 43  00:22:52:03 poster of the bazar Avesso

Fig. 44  00:23:30 tattoo, symbol of belonging

Fig. 45  00:23:21:04 strong colors, graffiti like

Fig. 46  00:23:16:02 punk pins

Fig. 47  00:22:54:05 beards and caps

Fig. 48  00:23:25 painting, punk hard core aesthetic

Fig. 49  00:23:31:00 tattoo

Fig. 50  00:22:56 “wayfarer” sunglasses
In the first screenshot (fig. 43), we see the poster of the bazar, that Fabio and his friend Kym Kobayashi have made; another friend, Marcelo Bazani, made a video while Fabio was painting it, in order to promote the event https://vimeo.com/100103087. They wrote the names of the artists exhibiting and selling their work at the bazar, in the background we see the wall partially covered with colors from different previous paintings sessions.

The colors used in the paintings (fig. 55 and 58) and the ones of the clothes of the people in the pictures are very strong (44, 47, 51), they are contrasting with the grey of the city and they are a reminder of the ones used by the graffiti artists. The black is very often used in tattoos (45, 49), paintings (43, 45, 48) and garments (fig. 47). Other hallmarks among the independent artists that gravitate around “Avesso” are: the hip hop caps (fig. 47), the wayfarer style sunglasses (fig. 50, very popular in the 80's in the Western World and now trendy among hipsters in Brazil as in many other places), the long beards (fig. 47), the indie type shirts (fig. 51), etc. These are the symbols that unite, they demonstrate a visually explicit sense of belonging of the community, they are the kit, the strip: garments and aesthetic codes with which they recognize each other as members of the same team. They help Fabio and his friends recognize themselves as part of the same team in the field, they create cohesion, they manifest their common interest in art, a similar taste in music, similar values, political ideas, and also similar goals in life. Most of them are trying to make it as artists, trying to become professionals, live off their artwork and that is one of the main reasons why they are at the bazar.

By aggregating artist friends in the bazar event, Fabio is creating a sense of collectivity that develops around on a series of activities (the art activities) and a certain inventory of signs (these described above). He responds to their need for community and audience for their art: he is providing them a stage where they can perform and exhibit their work, where their art is
exposed and can be seen, bought, but most of all recognized.
The personality and role of Fabio among his co-players during the bazar is that of a **midfielder**: he is in the center of the game, he is altruistic, working hard for the team’s benefit, he proposes the action, suggests the goals, has an overall vision of the field and the game.
As a promoter, the manager of the Avesso club, he provides a field where to train (the atelier, where friends come to paint), he organizes the games and the venues, helped by his co-manager, Carol. They can choose also if some players should be excluded and included, if someone doesn’t behave properly, he/she can be excluded. In the atelier and in Avesso, he is trying to build from the bottom, he is very concerned with the relationship that he is building inside it, that’s one of the meanings that art has for him: community.

![I will film the bloggers' world](image1)

![Fabio teased by his friends](image2)

**Fig. 52** 00:24:46:22 Carol's bloggers community **Fig. 53** 00:25:53:22 Fabio teased by his friends

In fig. 52, we can see the other community that Carol is part of in the bazar, i.e. the blogger's community, or that of influential people on the net. In the picture, we see them communicating with their smartphones, they are among some of the closest friends of Carol and quite important for the bazar too, because they can promote the event, because of their online popularity. Carol is part of both communities, the one of independent artists which Fabio belongs to and the social media publicity one.

**Fig. 53** shows the last part of the bazar, while Fabio decides to have a tattoo done on his foot. He is a bit drunk, and Carol and some of his friends are concerned whether he is conscious of what he is doing or not, since having a tattoo done on the foot is very painful. He is the center of the bazar, the promoter and an appreciated artist, he want to commemorate this moment by marking it indelibly in his skin. Many friends and buyers left the bazar already, some of the closest remained there and it is the moment of celebrating the success of the event and his proponent, Fabio.
While the tattoo is made, his friends and Carol tease him, underlining his centrality and their friendship with him. The freedom of teasing him shows the high degree of confidence and closeness they have with Fabio, he is celebrated as a successful promoter, but first of all as a friend that creates community.

In this scene, Fabio and his closest friend, the core of Avesso, are celebrating the victory of the bazar, Fabio decides to get a tattoo, in order to commemorate the moment. Seen from the perspective of football, they are in the changing room, Fabio is the man of the match, the tattoo and the celebration of him from his friends, his co-players is an award that signifies his role in the victory, the successful bazar.

In fig 54, Carol shows the tattoo she had just decided to get, she says that she identifies with that image: “When I saw the drawing, I felt it represented me fighting in São Paulo, with the cold... and this thing of going ahead” and she shows it to her audience (and me). She is again quite aware of how to use symbols, how to show them to the camera and in her choice of the words. She decided to get the tattoo after Fabio had his done, at the end of the bazar. By having this tattoo made, marking her body indelibly and showing it to the camera, she is constructing and presenting visually her identity as a young woman fighting in the city.

In the screenshot, we can see that she is dressed with a coat like the girl in the image: she is saying to us both with her voice and the choice of symbol, that she is ready for the big metropolis and its challenges, she is dressed and equipped to fight within it. The clothes in the tattoo image, the hat, the scarf and the coat, are in fact communicating that she is equipped for handling the cold winters of São Paulo and its pitfalls, she is prepared for the challenging games to come.

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12 The winters in SP can be rough for Brazilian standards, with minimum temperatures of 6-10 degrees with mostly no eating system in the houses;
Furthermore, by making the tattoo, Carol is demonstrating his alliance and belonging to the people of Avesso, the independent artists; she is following and participating with Fabio in his path into that art world.

Fig. 55, during this scene, Carol talks about her generation, she makes a sociological analysis on how the society around her is changing: she feels part of a movement, of a generation of young people that are looking for new things, who want to live their lives independently from their parents, and are after opportunities. She is describing the “Golden generation” (see p. 48), she looks conscious of what she is experiencing and the time she lives in.

In the clip, taken from the video elicitation process, at fig. 56, Carol says that by watching the footage she could see another Brazil, and she talks about the stereotypes of Brazil saying: “There are people that think that in Brazil it is all about samba, carnival, joy, a party all the time... they don't understand our daily life, that is like every other city, country”.

In this passage, Carol expresses her idea of the stereotypes of foreigners and especially Westerners on Brazil (her audience here is primary the people in Europe who will see the film), she thinks that the filmed footage shows a different Brazil, that of their daily lives. In fact, that was one of the original aims of the whole project: by showing their every day life, “the particular”, the film-project e.g. intent to show the similarities and yet differences to other people in the world. My intentions in the project and her perception of it matched.

In the last shot of the movie, Carol looks at us, smiles and then walks away, she is continuing her life and she has a certain path in front of her. The ending is open.
Interrupted control in the actors’ performance in front of the camera

With Fabio, the interrupted control happened as a response to the interactivity in the use of the camera and the relationship of trust that we developed in our friendship. In fact, in 2013, when we first met, we immediately discovered our affinities, and we spent hours together talking about art and our lives. This affinity became a friendship, and the trust among us, developed because we spent quite some time together and also because Sarah is Carol’s best friend. The camera, in some situations became then a confessor: he told me his difficulties, the frustrations connected to his wish of becoming an artist. In these situations, he wasn’t in control of his self-narrative nor thinking of his agenda. He interrupted his aim of convincing the audience of the successful narrative of him working with strength and determination to become an artist and he showed instead, some of his weaknesses. He trusted that I wouldn't damage or misuse his image, I wouldn't misrepresent him to the audience, he relied on my ethics in representing him, on the base of our friendship.

With Carol, who is even more conscious of visual self-presentation than Fabio (because of the higher presence of social media in her private life and in her profession), the control was instead interrupted in situations in which the camera was observational. She told me the observational moments, when she was not speaking to the camera, were in her opinion very rich, because she forgot that the camera was there, and therefore she was not performing her “talk”. She referred to “my talk” when describing her controlled narrative of self to the camera.

7) Dreaming and becoming in online-offline urban São Paulo

The dream of inclusion, of social redemption of the urban periphery, is surrounded, encouraged but also distorted by the omnipresent and obsessive echo of success of the city. The need of being someone, of being known, being better than all the others (as Fabio describes it), is typical of a society that didn't leave other alternatives to its poor than the myth of a great success, embodied, for example in its football idols. Fabio and Carol, in their achieved inclusion in the economical and social life of the center, are examples of the social
redemption of some within the now hopeful Brazilian urban periphery.

In the dreaming and the becoming of Carol, to live and work in the center is very important: with that she measures her individual achievement. Part of her self-realization is also the idea of having a family and a house where she can be secure and express her creativity: the relationship with Fabio is central in her project of life.

“The internet was my gateway to the world”

“I always wanted to be in the center, where the things happen”\(^{13}\)

Carol achieved her dream of being in the center, thanks the possibilities that she found in the use of the internet. By showing herself online, being visualized, she started to exist, and after to emerge within the social media world, until she arrived where she wanted.

When she was living in the periphery and in search for opportunities. She sensed that in the social media, she could have chances to achieve the life she dreamed. By winning a beauty competition she gained her first big audience online, and she realized that her self-image could have been important in her social mobility. That audience was a capital, but it wasn’t enough for her to reach her goals, she had to increase it and interact with it. Therefore she started to develop a self-narration online in which she shared a big part of her public and private life. Thanks to her ability of writing, her followers got enthused on her story and the events of her life. By seeing her images and reading her texts, her semi-private narrative, they could know something about her and get emotionally attached to her.

Her considerable audience provided the attention of other popular people in the net (who started to become her online friends and allies) and the agencies of publicity. People working in the world of publicity, started to give her opportunities: on the base of the economic values of her skills and of her popularity, and because with her narrative she appealed to their emotions and empathy. In fact:

- her popularity represents a direct value for the agencies of publicity, her followers can become targets of a publicity campaign when she accepts (and gets paid) to make a post about a company's product.

- her skills in managing the interaction with big audiences are valuable for agencies of publicity, that hired her in order to promote their clients (companies) that desire to acquire

\(^{13}\) Carol’s worlds during her self-narrative to the camera;
more clients through their social media channels.

By starting to work within the world of publicity and by participating in the social events organized for influencers by the agencies, her offline friends (the influencers) became her offline friends and colleagues, and the agencies became her employers.

As we could see, FB and the other social media have been her means to be included in a new social world in the center. Thanks to the online access, she could cross social and spatial boundaries: had the possibility of getting in contact and of establishing relationships and of forging alliances with people that belonged to different social realities from hers. That possibility wasn't easy to achieve directly from the offline periphery in a stratified society like that of São Paulo, also because of the geographical and social distance of it to the center. Through FB and the other social media, Carol could first be digitally included in the society that she socially wanted to be a part of. In fact as Carol said:

“I first admired them, and now I go in their house, as a friend”¹⁴

In this process of becoming, of social navigating, the ability in the management of her visual self-narrative online has been determinant: by developing an appealing and convincing narrative she enthused her audience, engaged it and that gave her the opportunity to finally be included in the world of publicity. By managing her narrative of self if FB, by being conscious of her audiences, she enthused them and achieved success, an important position in the sector of publicity. In general, Carol branded herself in order to find her way through the capitalist society and the economy of SP.

By doing so gained success and a better life, but she also sacrificed some of her privacy, and commercialized part of her image. In fact as Hearn critically argues when he talks about FB and other social media:

“On sites such as these the lines between the private identity and public persona, corporate sponsor and individual producer, user and consumer are hopelessly blurred” (Hearn, 2008, 212)

What made her succeed in her social mobility was her conscious self-representation, the ability of grasping opportunities, together with her creative strategies of finding her way through, dribbling the opponents, i.e. the Brazilian “jeitinho (for it, look at p. 51).

¹⁴ Carol during the interview she talks about her friend, the popular people in the net;
Fabio on his side, is still in a process of becoming, he didn’t achieve his individual dream like Carol did, he is trying to succeed. With Carol he shares the idea of having a family and a house, she is central in his project of life like he is for her.

In his social mobility from the reality he was in Santos to the center of SP, the possibilities offered by the economical development of Brazil were fundamental and also his determination in achieving goals. In that sense, he and Carol have a similar story, they always ran toward their goals and grasped the opportunities that were coming in their life. The professional situation of Fabio is different from that of Carol: the field where he sees his individual self-realization, that of art, is different from that of his actual profession of photo editor.

In his ongoing process of becoming an artist that lives out of his artwork, FB can be important in different ways: there he can find art references, he can develop a network of people that shared his same passion, it can make his artwork visible, it can help to aggregate people around the atelier and the bazar and finally and it can help him to commercialize.

With the social media, in the same way of Carol, he was first digitally included in the society that he socially wanted to be a part of. He first became online friend of many independent artists and after, they became his friends in his social life, and part of Avesso.

In his FB activities, he is branding his artwork in order to sell it: that can be his way to achieve his dream of living out of his art. He is at ease with his self-representation but not as Carol is, he narrates the story of his daily life, but less frequently than her. In his interaction online, he wants to put art on the center, and not himself. He is afraid that by narrating too much his personal self, he can loose the respect of his art community. His brothers could tease him, or accuse him of being too narcissist, superficial.

By self-narrating themselves in their social media interactions, Fabio and Carol came to an existence in the urban society they wanted to be a part of. They could gather audience (especially Carol), increase their networks and access new social fields, that of publicity for Carol and that of independent art for Fabio. In this process, the social media was determinant because it gave them an arena where to be visible and witnessed:

“… Facebook might be regarded as providing a crucial medium of visibility and public witnessing.” (Miller, 2010, 15)
In FB they can dream what they want to become: the process of visual identity construction and negotiation online incentives a dreaming of self that can catalyze a becoming in the social reality. As Uominen says:

“Facebook is a question of “expansive realization” and “expansive potential”, allowing people to show who they think they are as well as who they think they could be”. (Uominen, 2013, 128)

The practice of visually narrate themselves online can be determinant in Carol's and Fabio's process of becoming within the social realities where they are navigating, in different ways:

- First, for Carol her daily self-narrative is a direct self-promotion, she brands herself and that gives her opportunities and advantages in her social life. For Fabio that’s also true, but to a lesser extend. These perspectives, have been discussed in the earlier paragraphs of this chapter when describing Carol and Fabio’s processes.

- Second, the reflexivity installed by this practice can make them more skillful in their performances to different audiences, and can give them more chances to be successful when they try to impress them in their social realities. How did I come to this last interpretation?

By analyzing their performance to the camera with my classmates in the seminars at VCS, I first discovered how Fabio and Carol were conscious of their visual selves, in control when narrating themselves to the camera, aware of the visual frames and of their audiences. As I argued in chapter 5, their harmony and ability when performing derives mainly from the reflexivity installed by their self-narrative online.

In FB Carol (more) and Fabio, test the public appreciation of their narratives: they refine their narratives and thus train their own scripts, according to the different audiences that they try to impress. When they practice their visual narratives in FB, they get more aware of the expectations among the audiences in the society where they live and learn how to fulfill them: by showing them the society they live in, by visualizing it, FB helps them to identify it, and it teaches them how to impress it. This ability becomes precious when they need to convince their audiences with their performance, when they are trying to reach an opportunity, e.g. during a job interview, a meeting, a bazar, an exhibition.

In my study, I explored how to investigate the actors’ daily lives by using some of the visual tools and methods, how to achieve anthropological insights and understanding about them.
The main thing I have discovered is their consciousness in the self-representation and some of its importance in their lives.

What does it take to become in SP in the realities of my actors? This is a question that I asked myself during the whole fieldwork.

“One needs to dance according to the music that is played here, to succeed in SP”¹⁵

In SP’s rhythm and flux, a conscious self-presentation, combined with creative strategies in finding your way through the obstacles (the Brazilian “jeitinho”), the ability of grasping the chances, of building network, and the determination, can lead to the development of one’s career. In their emergence in their society, the actors of my study use FB and the other social media as commercial tools for their development. In order to achieve their dreams in the highly capitalistic society where they live, Fabio and Carol need to commercialize their art and/or their self-images. Their dreams of having a house, a family, and the possibility of expressing their creativity, are in fact confronted with the very commercial nature of the city, they are indivisible from it.

Their daily lives, their values, their interests, their relationship, their sociality and the presence of social media, make them very similar and yet different to many of their peers living in Western cities, like Trento, Utrecht, Genoa, Copenhagen or Tromsø. Carol and Fabio don’t match up with the stereotypical image of Brazil nor they are particularly exotic for a Western or a Nordic public. In their story of emergence, of independency and yet of alliance and reciprocity they appear quite rational. The rationality, the visual consciousness and the determination they need in order to succeed in the daily life of SP, directly counteract the stereotypical idea that sees Brazil as the irrational, primitive, lazy country of hedonism, of the eternal carnival, of football. Football is indeed present, omnipresent, but not in a stereotypical form, it has deep meanings in the society as in the becoming of Fabio and Carol. It helps us to understand the society and their way of navigating through it, their way of dreaming.

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¹⁵ Carol during her narrative of self to the camera;
Bibliography


