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A Politics of Hope

The Making of Brazil's Post-Neoliberal New Middle Class

Moisés Kopper

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Abstract

How does hope emerge as a life-altering possibility against the backdrop of economic precarity, political disregard, and soaring inequality? This paper explores the role of hope as both a political-economic construct and an infrastructural affect in the wake of policy implementation. It draws on a five-year ethnography among community leaders, housing activists, planners, politicians, state officials, and market representatives involved in the implementation of Minha Casa Minha Vida, Brazil's largest social housing program. In recent years, low-income projects have become the battleground for experimental, post-neoliberal forms of democratic governance via inclusive consumption. These public–private housing infrastructures give insight into the relationship between material hope and the making of Latin America's "pink tide" new middle classes: how grassroots communities organize around hierarchies of worthiness to allocate wellbeing-enhancing state benefits, and how the uneven distribution of these benefits sustains the constitution of emerging, albeit temporary, collectives of consumer citizens.

Keywords: citizenship, infrastructure, material hope, middle class, post-neoliberalism, social housing

Zusammenfassung

Dieses Papier untersucht die Rolle von Hoffnung bei der Umsetzung von Politikvorhaben in zweifacher Hinsicht: als politökonomisches Konstrukt und als infrastruktureller Affekt. Es basiert auf einer fünfjährigen ethnografischen Untersuchung unter kommunalen Führungskräften, Wohnungsaktivistinnen und -aktivisten, Planungsverantwortlichen, staatlichen Funktionärinnen und Funktionären, Vertreterinnen und Vertretern aus Politik und Wirtschaft, die an der Implementierung von „Minha Casa Minha Vida", Brasiliens größtem sozialen Wohnungsbauprogramm, beteiligt waren. In den letzten Jahren sind Bauprojekte für Geringverdiener zum Schauplatz für experimentelle und postneoliberale Formen demokratischer Governance geworden, die darauf zielen, Bürger durch Konsum zu inkludieren. Das Beispiel dieser öffentlich-privaten Wohninfrastrukturen hilft, den Zusammenhang zwischen materieller Hoffnung und dem Entstehen der neuen lateinamerikanischen Mittelschichten zu verstehen. Es zeigt, wie sich neue Gemeinschaften entlang von Wertehierarchien organisieren, um staatliche Hilfen zu verteilen und macht deutlich, wie die ungleiche Verteilung dieser Hilfen die Entstehung neuer, wenn auch kurzlebiger, Kollektive von „Verbraucherbürgern" fördert.

Schlagwörter: bürgerschaftliches Engagement, Infrastruktur, materielle Hoffnung, Mittelschichten, Postneoliberalismus, sozialer Wohnungsbau

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1 Introduction

> Where I lived before, there was no class. People were expendable. Now they are proud users of cards and buy in stores. Even their skin looks better; they are smiling more often. All this affects your mind: you start to develop a class.
> (Tio Paulinho, housing activist; January 2015, conversation with the author)

When Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva started his first term as president of Brazil in January 2003, he famously argued that hope had defeated fear. In an attempt to preempt the anxieties of local and international financial elites, who threatened capital flight if the Workers' Party (Partido dos Trabalhadores, PT) candidate won, Lula addressed the Brazilian people in his first speech as president:

> This is a country that never ceases to be young and new. These people know the meaning of suffering, but at the same time know the meaning of happiness. These people believe in themselves and in their own strength. I believe that a great future awaits Brazil because our happiness is bigger than our pain, our strength is bigger than our misery, and our hope is bigger than our fears.[1]

After a decade of successfully implemented social and economic policies had raised Brazil's international profile, it was a dearth of hope that was invoked to explain the country's abrupt plunge into economic recession and political turmoil following the controversial impeachment of Lula's successor and mentoree, Dilma Rousseff. And when Fernando Haddad – the most recent candidate of the Workers' Party – battled against a far-right machinery of authoritarian and conservative "fake news" in the 2018 presidential runoff, hope was remade into a figure of political and social congealment in his rehashed campaigning catchphrase, that "hope will defeat hatred and lies."

As is clear in these vignettes, the targets of hope – and its envisioned Others – shift over time. While examples abound of how hope pervades the realm of politics to create enduring political and economic futures, far less has been said about the relationship between institutional and grassroots forms of hoping. What is missing is a comprehensive

I am grateful for the thoughtful suggestions and comments made by the reviewers, Edward Fischer and Benjamin Junge, which made this paper a stronger one. I thank Jens Beckert and his research group on the Sociology of Markets for their valuable input on parts of this project and for making the free exchange of ideas possible. I am also grateful to Akos Rona-Tas and Sergio Visacovsky for their comments on earlier versions of this paper. The paper was prepared during my stay as a Visiting Postdoctoral Researcher at the Max Planck Institute for the Study of Societies (MPIfG), Cologne. I thank the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation and the Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education Personnel (CAPES) for their financial support.

1 Available at: http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/2621821.stm. Accessed: 10.14.2018.

analytics of hope as both a political construct and an affective reality, and of the ways in which hope is engaged, honed, and maintained as a bottom-up and experiential driving force in collaborative development. Theorizing the intersection between scales of hope and policy implementation leads us to examine the channels, materials, and rationalities that make up a politics of hope.

Hope can be experimentally conceptualized as the elusive driving force behind streams of connection joining collectives, institutions, and individuals. It is the thrust spurring agents towards windows of opportunity that make ideals that were previously deemed unattainable, too abstract, or simply unworthy, worth pursuing. A politics of hope scales up this principle to encompass the wealth of agencies, languages, and institutions concerned with promoting, seeking, honing, harboring, or extinguishing hope.

In countries plagued with high levels of inequality, the promises of *material hope* are all the more consequential. Different from the neoliberal political and economic structures that uphold pure material self-interest, material hope can become pervasive as a vessel for the enactment of grassroots and post-neoliberal institutional politics, for the pursuit of value through marketed infrastructures, and for the projection of life into enduring futures. Material hope opens up new avenues to understand how policies and individual and collective expectations are mutually constituted through the ongoing pursuit of wellbeing. It encapsulates a hope for the good life that is envisioned at the juncture of policy outcomes, personal efforts, and collective meritocracy – giving rise to infrastructurally upgraded, materially inclusive, and technologically mediated forms of belonging.

This paper explores the intersection of long-term policy implementation and the emergence of political and economic forms of hope in Brazil's public housing system. It asks: How does material hope emerge as a life-altering possibility against the backdrop of economic precarity, political disregard, and soaring inequality? Under what conditions does hope become an asset of political and economic governmentality, fueling moral economies of participation, giving traction to the local machineries of public policies, and becoming the matter of subjective and collective transformation?

Ethnography is uniquely qualified for this task. The empirical evidence I present is part of my book manuscript, titled "Architectures of Hope: Infrastructural Citizenship and Class Mobility in Brazil's Public Housing." The book maps the role of material hope in everyday forms of poverty governance in contemporary Brazil. It is an ethnographic account of the country's largest social housing policy, the Minha Casa Minha Vida (MCMV) program.

Between 2012 and 2015, I conducted ethnographic fieldwork in the city of Porto Alegre among a community of politically engaged housing applicants called "Codespa." Codespa organized in 2009, when local leaders affiliated with the city's participatory budgeting scheme forayed into impoverished neighborhoods, persuading the needy to mobilize for housing – a social right guaranteed by the country's latest and most progressive constitution of 1988. After months of pressure on the municipality to acquire a cen-

trally located plot of land, construction of the apartment complex began in 2010 and was completed in 2014. That same year, because of their powerful political connections, Codespa leaders were granted the autonomy to handpick 160 families from among their members to move to Residencial Bento Gonçalves.[2]

Throughout and after this process, I followed political activities, expert commissions on housing, and meetings between activists, leaders, street-level bureaucrats, and representatives of the state and the market. I visited potential beneficiaries at their old homes and in their new apartments; I carried out interviews with leaders, architects, planners, politicians, and bank and sales representatives; and I conducted a socioeconomic survey, in both 2015 and 2017, with the 160 heads of household whose families moved to apartments. Returning to the field in 2016 and 2017, I gained a sense of the continuities and transformations of this community of first-time homeowners and their political, economic, and subjective predicaments.

Codespa quickly became one of the most prominent participatory forums in the city. Gathering hundreds of low-income families to attend weekly activities as they prepared to receive their apartment units, Codespa gave traction to the local configuration of the policy by harnessing private hopes and converting them into collectively managed aspirational assets. Codespa's efforts thus constitute a unique window into the long-term challenges and everyday ambiguities whereby intervention projects overlap with material hope and meet their targets of intervention. This iterative process I term "infrastructural citizenship": a form of social membership that arises from the uneven aspiration for and distribution of state resources and is thus deeply entangled with the materiality of infrastructure, from the political artifacts pervading housing activism to the economic artifacts enabling dreams of homeownership.

The paper first conceptualizes the notion of "policy afterlives" by locating MCMV within the recent political economy of Brazilian developmentalism. The following two sections situate the concept of material hope within the history of Brazilian urban developments and advocate its centrality in understanding the temporalities and contentious infrastructures of participation through which housing policies are implemented and shape new political subjectivities. The two final sections explore the role of economic "mediants" (Appadurai 2015), such as consumption objects and payment instruments, as key material infrastructures yoking ideals of the good life into concrete configurations of wellbeing after people move to a housing project. The conclusion returns to the specificities of Brazil's post-neoliberal new middle class as a vantage point from which to understand current political developments in the country.

2 All names of individuals have been anonymized to preserve their identity and privacy. Names of public authorities and institutions have been retained, as have those of publicly engaged leaders, with their informal consent. Names of places, like Residencial Bento Gonçalves, are kept in their original forms to preserve historical singularity, insofar as geographical location and media resonance are pivotal in shaping place-making and collective identity.

2 Policy afterlives

Together, the assemblages of actors, concepts, institutions, and technologies – along with their transversal intersections and the social fields they shape – constitute what I call the "afterlives" of public policies. Anthropology has long drawn attention to the cultural and social embeddedness of policy worlds as productive assemblages where "actors, agents, concepts, and technologies interact in different sites, creating or consolidating new rationalities of governance and regimes of knowledge and power" (Shore, Wright, and Però 2011, 2). Yet long-term accounts of the designs, impacts, and empirical ambiguities ingrained in policy implementation remain scarce, despite anthropology's unique toolset to trace these developments over time.

By tracing the afterlives of interventions and focusing on their human dimensions we can gain a concrete sense of how technologies travel, map onto space, and illuminate the limits and capacities of subject-making. Observing the shifting qualities of policies over time, or their afterlives, helps to reveal the interplay of empirical scales through which they are implemented and become a pervasive moral language defining effectiveness and failure. What is more, the ethnographic study of policy afterlives gives insight into what changes in the meantime, as people wait and hope and envision the unknown. It restores the complex and lived entanglements of policies – the milieus in which they unfold and acquire a life of their own, shifting action, shaping institutional relations, and affecting materialities.

Over the last fifteen years, Brazil has provided a formidable case for the study of policy afterlives. Profiting enormously from the global commodity super-cycle of the mid-2000s and the Chinese and Indian demand for raw materials under lower labor and production costs, Brazil accumulated 40 percent GNP growth and 58 percent household income growth between 2004 and 2013. These numbers conflated with the positive results of a host of economic and social policies. During the same period, real wage gains amounted to 76 percent, with absolute values rising from 63 dollars per month in 2000 to 227 dollars per month in 2011.[3] Unemployment also plummeted from 12.6 percent in 2002 to 4.8 percent in 2014. Brazil ended 2012 with its lowest Gini coefficient since 1960, leading economists and policymakers to hail the end of endemic poverty and the incorporation of some 40 million people into what was proclaimed as Brazil's "new middle class" (Ferreira et al. 2013; Kopper and Damo 2018; Neri 2008; Parker and Walker 2013; Ravallion 2009; Ricci 2010).

Such gains were complemented by massive incentives at the consumption end, despite economists cautioning against the pitfalls of a hyper-financialized credit economy. These included low-interest credit instruments, bank services targeting the poor, and fiscal subsidies – such as tax cuts for the car industry and household appliances – aimed specifically

3 All dollar amounts in this paper are US dollars. I also adopt an average dollar conversion rate for 2013 (1USD=2.34BRL) to preserve the purchasing power during the time of fieldwork.

at leveraging economic development. Purchasing power was also promoted by a stark redistributive politics led by Bolsa Família, the country's conditional cash transfer program, acknowledged worldwide as a pioneer instrument of social policy that entrusts the poor with direct money transfers. By 2015, Bolsa Família was catering to 14 million households across the country, costing as little as 0.5 percent of the country's GNP per year.

No other public policy epitomizes the joint gains of political and economic development and large- and small-scale interventionism better than MCMV. Combining powerful social and economic policy mechanisms, MCMV was launched in 2009 and tasked with constructing 3.4 million homes at a critical moment of political and economic transition. On paper, the multi-billion-dollar initiative would be able to fix almost half of the country's entire housing deficit, including sub-optimal living conditions in slums and informal settlements. Levering an ambitious credit platform administrated by Caixa Ecônomica Federal (CEF), Brazil's largest public bank, MCMV supported developers interested in constructing large-scale projects in the country's most remote peripheries. By the end of 2016, CEF had contracted almost 4 million housing units, injecting an estimated 55 billion dollars in outright housing investments.

Sprawling across the country's big ailing peripheries and into its most remote rural areas, social housing projects became battlegrounds for experimental, *post-neoliberal* forms of governance via inclusive consumption. By putting in place specific social and financial channels that enact their own redistributive politics (Ferguson 2015), MCMV moves beyond the dismal neoliberal state insofar as "the market, while critical, is not the sole dimension shaping governmental reason" (Biehl 2016, 439). In doing so, MCMV creates a particular kind of (social) market circuit within capitalism (Zelizer 2005) that seeks to uphold citizenship rights while promoting market-friendly environments. Post-neoliberal policies thus combine both decentralized state bureaucracies and governmental credit provision (Ruckert, Macdonald, and Proulx 2017) through various political and economic mediations – which generate, as I will discuss later, particular hybrids of citizen consumers.

Housing allocations are administrated by municipal housing departments, which are in charge of enforcing the official selection criteria, including female heads of household, the elderly, people with disabilities, and families living in informal slums. This decentralized bureaucratic structure stretches into the localities, shaping what I call "architectures of participation": the political terrains beset by community leaders, politicians, urban planners, public bankers, and activist citizens – through which housing units reach their targets. In an effort to promote state accountability and transparency, direct channels are created between the government and housing movements, encouraging potential beneficiaries to take part in bottom-up grassroots politics.

Availing themselves of Porto Alegre's tradition of participatory politics, long-standing community leaders brought together hundreds of low-income families, attracted by the promise of homeownership, in the assemblage of Codespa. Determined to build a mod-

el community, Codespa leaders organized meetings with key stakeholders in the policy, from social workers to bank representatives. Participating in events, festivities, raffles, and housing meetings, and struggling to make themselves visible as both subjects of aid and hope, activist citizens were part and parcel of this community network through which housing units found their way to a select number of citizens. Equipped only with their will to thrive for a better life, these beneficiaries – and their hopes – would become pivotal conduits in the afterlives of the housing program.

3 Material hope

Hope, many Brazilian social scientists have noted, is a distinctive feature of urban dynamics, informing patterns of housing occupation and distribution across the city. Hope is structural to the long-standing tension between the *morro* [hilltops] and the *asfalto* [asphalt], two key indexers of social class and topoi of inequalities ingrained in Brazilian urban space. This dichotomy has long informed the urban literature on the overlapping qualities of spatial and social differentiation in Brazilian metropolises. When dissecting the politics of Brazilian middle classes, for example, Velho notes that the map of the city is better read as a "social map where people are defined by their place of residence," to the point that "people change social class when moving from one neighborhood to another" (1973, 80).

Conversely, in chronicling the modes of life of low-income, informal workers living on "peripheral housing aggregates" and excluded from infrastructural progress, consumption, and welfare programs during the years of Brazil's "economic miracle," the anthropologist Ruth Cardoso notes that the narratives of *favela* (Rio de Janeiro slum) dwellers already contained the *hope* for upward social mobility. "The *favelado* showed us an envelope with an embroidered monogram he had designed for a potential family business. In the presence of this envelope, then, the *favelado* is already an entrepreneur. He only lacks the resources to realize his project" (1977, 166).

Similarly for the context of Porto Alegre, Claudia Fonseca illustrates how the sinuosity of streets – up and down the hills – is an allegory of the precarious living conditions of slum residents, "sandwiched between two classes" of subjects and material comfort. "A slight slip uphill means a fall into marginality," writes the anthropologist; "the *hope* is to 'move upwards,' to where wealth lies, to the legitimacy that exists by the asphalt" (2000, 48). Social improvements, whenever possible, materialized in the upgrading and construction of houses; although the desire to move closer to the asphalt was there, people stayed put.

Codespa's collective project of upward mobility from within the premises and promises of public policies complicates the intractable dichotomy between the hills and the asphalt and calls for a more nuanced conceptual toolset to understand the contemporary

intersecting domains of class and space. "We should drop labels," I once heard a key research interlocutor at Codespa say. "We don't need the hills and we don't need the asphalt. What matters is not where people come from, but where they want to land, where they *hope* to be." Both hilltops and asphalt were, in this view, tropes of reference that contributed to keeping social and geographical differences intact.

Contrary to the title of Codespa's founding seminar – "From the Hilltops towards the Asphalt" – and its suggestion of fixed class positionalities, what mattered most were the connectors between hilltops and asphalt. "Towards" revealed a desire for movement and dislocation; a vibrant flux for improvement, both individual and collective; a yearning for development and progress; and a move towards simple hope: not yet fully actualized, hope was a potent force invoked in each and every one of them en route to an indeterminate future that would be fully acknowledged in the process of fighting for, and achieving, the house and its infrastructures.

In other works (Kopper 2019) I have drawn attention to the urge to develop alternative frameworks of class to understand the specificity of Latin America's recent leap towards upward mobility. I argued that to grasp the ever-elusive social experience of "being in the middle," we can conceptualize class positionalities at once as the reflection of particular conditions of possibility, forms of biopolitical and market intervention, and as intersubjective categories of apprehension, which together form a middle-class "sensorial": an assemblage of images, words, and material affects through which class mobility is experienced, stratified, and located in time and space. A class sensorial urges us to find empirical mediators whereby processes of stratification are apprehended in their local, national, and global levels. These mediating artifacts connect broad economic and historical configurations to the experiences and languages of people directly impacted by them. A class sensorial, in other words, emerges from people's aspirational experiments with past and future tropes of infrastructure, as they reveal ideals of the good life that both are linked to a wider constellation of inter-class imaginaries and seek to transcend them. I return to this point at the end of the paper.

In what follows, I explore the role of material hope in this middle-class sensorial as a driving force that pushes people to wait, to aspire, and to remain engaged with collective structures of envisioning the future in the face of endemic uncertainty. Hope is arguably an underrated concept in the social sciences (Swedberg 2017). Particularly within anthropology, despite recent waves of interest, it has never risen to the status that the notions of "aspiration," "project," and "expectation" have enjoyed in sociology (Morgan 2007; Schütz 1951; 1962), especially the sociology of class, or the empirical analysis of future makings (Bourdieu 1979; Chinoy 1955). Studies of hope in anthropology can take two distinct epistemological directions: a phenomenological emphasis on hopefulness against all odds; and the study of specific formations of hope and temporal reasoning. While the former usually gravitates around the almost normative prospects of a positive anthropology (Appadurai 2016; Fischer 2014; Ortner 2016), centering on quasi-utopias (Harvey 2000), dreams (Miyazaki 2006; 2013), hope as a method (Mi-

yazaki 2004; 2006; 2017), and the capacity to aspire (Appadurai 2013), the latter tends to emphasize its dark qualities, centering on crisis in political discourses (Mittleman 2009; Roitman 2014; Sleat 2013), human and natural catastrophes (Kleist and Jansen 2016), and structural economic and political uncertainty (Cook 2018; Janeja and Bandak 2018; Jansen 2013; 2015; Narotzky and Besnier 2014).

I am interested in exploring how these two dimensions come together as policy afterlives intersect with private and communal aspirations to create landscapes of material hope in contexts of endemic economic uncertainty and fraught housing policy implementation. While the relationship between affective dispositions and political-economic frameworks is usually researched through the reduction of human motivations to either self-interest or biopolitical governmentality, here I pursue a third avenue: namely, the governing of poverty through the "agencement" (Callon 2006) of infrastructural aspirations and middle-class affects. Ultimately, I am concerned with the subjective but also the political, economic, and institutional contours of the politics of hope that gave form to Brazil's recent social and economic policies.

A central component of hope – from middle-class longings to the aspirations of asphalt dwellers and hilltop residents – is the ability to redirect inner knowledge in the face of instability (Miyazaki 2006; 2017) and failure (Miyazaki and Riles 2005). By reshuffling elements from past systems into open-ended and fiercely yearned-for futures – that which "has not yet become" (Bloch 1954) – one expands the boundaries of what is known, believed, and expected in the present while also seeking to act upon the objective and subjective possibilities to project life into the future and (re)construct a life deemed worth living (Fischer 2014; Narotzky and Besnier 2014). As Beckert (2013; 2016; 2018) has shown for the case of fictional expectations in the economy, such imaginaries, to remain functional and intelligible, ought to be grounded on a present-day sense of attainability.

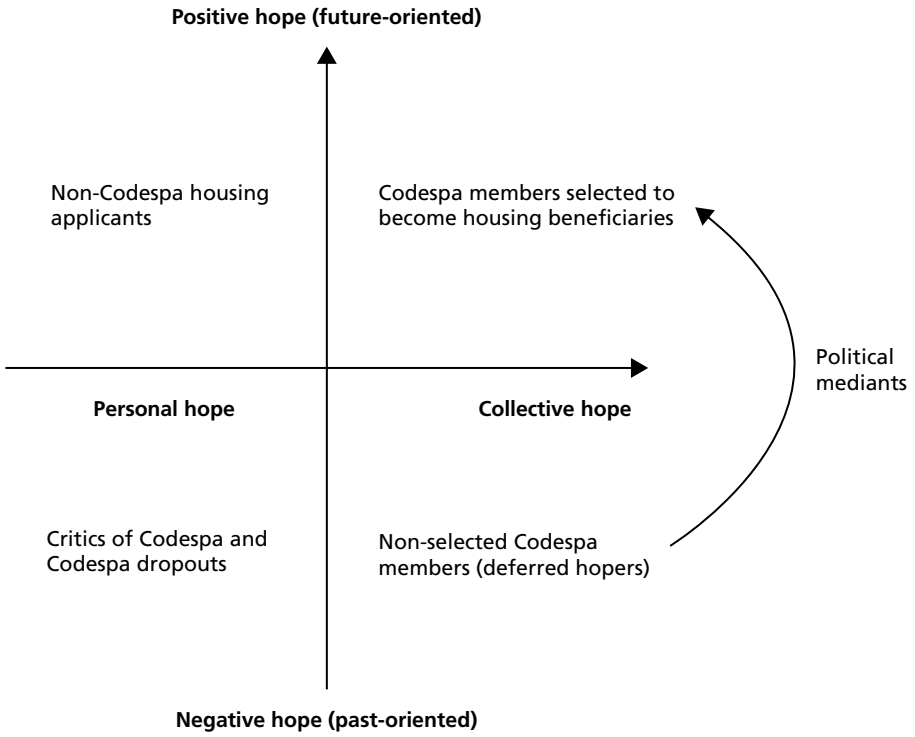
Yet, as personal and collective hope circulates, paving the way for an ethics of possibility (Appadurai 2013) and entering the realm of political aspiration, it also gives rise to unequally distributed capacities to aspire. In his highly perceptive ethnography of the aftermath of Zambia's economic boom, Ferguson (1999) shows how workers cope differently with experiences of economic advance and decline. Thus, as Hage (2003; 2004) maintains, the ability to engage hope against all odds is in itself context-dependent and diffracts across the fault lines of power, social hierarchy, class, race, and gender, so that understanding how people hope, and what they hope for, is inextricable from the politically laden question of governing hope, or the political-economic conditions under which specific forms of hope flourish and eventuate.

4 Local infrastructures of hope

Among the collectively organized first-time homeowners I encountered in Porto Alegre, I found hope to be a productive way of thinking through precariousness and entrenched vulnerability. Documenting people's work for social membership, I grew interested in the shifting qualities of hope. Here, Richard Swedberg's "realistic" approach to hope proves useful. Conceived as "the wish for something to come true" (2017), the objects and means of hope are always culturally grounded and can be studied according to degrees of actualization – along a passive–active axis – and wishfulness – along an inspiring–overtaking axis.

In Figure 1, I draw on Swedberg's conceptualization to suggest that the efforts made by Codespa and its members to avail themselves of the policy outcomes can be problematized as a function of two intersecting vectors of hope. On a horizontal axis, hope moves from personal to collective domains as it ceases to be a private and abstract quality, rooted in ideals of wellbeing, and is actively coopted by collective infrastructures of participation that enshrine people's capacity to aspire. This is a move akin to Swedberg's passage from passive to active hope, as engaging in collective structures of participation provides opportunities that increase each individual's chances for homeownership to come true. On a vertical axis, hope shifts from a negative towards a positive domain,

Figure 1 The social dynamics of hoping, from personal to collective hope, and from negative to positive hope



as it ceases to be associated with the past and failure (such as life in the hilltops) and becomes attached to materialities that lend it a sense of attainability (such as perceived life "by the asphalt"). This move resonates with Swedberg's passage from overtaking to inspiring hope, as it transitions from abstract and utopian ideals into concrete, productive, and attainable configurations of hope.

The shifting qualities of hope become evident as Codespa's leaders recruited and gathered hundreds of citizens from the peripheries of Porto Alegre on promises of building a model community. In 2010, shortly after Codespa was founded, the municipality announced Residencial Bento Gonçalves, an enclaved housing project comprised of 540 apartment units to be constructed at the core of Partenon's middle-class residential area – a welcome albeit unexpected move, given that all other MCMV developments were relegated to Restinga, a faraway peripheral neighborhood with a precarious urban infrastructure. Throughout five years of arduous assemblies, protests, and festivities, the association prepared its members to conduct themselves as residents of a middle-class condominium, a process that would purportedly set them apart from failed housing initiatives of the past.

The construction of this exceptional success story in grassroots policy implementation empowered local leaders to create benchmarks to allocate housing on top of the policy's official eligibility criteria. Over time, Codespa's role as a para-legal technology of governance (Biehl and McKay 2012) – working in collaboration with governments and low-income markets and against the competing agencies of traffickers, police violence, and conservative society – grew into a wieldy arbitrator of people's capacity to hope. As the number of enrolled families far outweighed the number of available housing units, Codespa devised a complex and interconnected system to keep track of members and manage their participation. In a few years, hope shifted from a personal domain towards a collective navigational capability. It materialized in new forms of technological belonging, such as computer-controlled sign-in logs, written records of meetings, membership cards with pictures and personal information, and bookkeeping registers that controlled the monthly payments made by members to cover the association's operational costs.

Indeed, we can think of the materialities of participation as political mediants, that is, as a particular class of "actants" (Latour 2005) that organize the politization of private hopes. Appadurai (2015) defined mediants as forms of mediation between the visible and the invisible, the material and the social, that are temporarily linked together as they participate in housing-related assemblages. Codespa's infrastructures of participation are not simply preassigned vessels of culture; neither are they actants with agency of their own. But their material and temporal properties enable forms of sociality that indigenize the uncertainty of material worlds within existing cultural schema while shoring up new forms of collectively sanctioned hope.

These objective measures of participation (implemented to foster transparency) were combined with random visits to the members' houses to validate their perceived social vulnerability. Additionally, the circulation of gifts, rumors, and public testimonies of one's own vulnerability were also ways of establishing a reputation before the leaders. Together, these practical forms of accountability shaped what I call the "machine of worthiness." By accreting and calculating participation, the machine of worthiness provides an assessment of each person's merits and ranks them according to their moral work and public display of hope. Unequally distributed, material hope (and its uneven contours) is fabricated in the very process of hoping for and aspiring to first-time homeownership.

The next section provides an ethnographic account of how breakdowns in this cycle elicit a form of "deferred hope," as members learn to cope with broken expectations to reinvent their self-worth and regain hopes to project life into the future. I document how the contours of this model community are fabricated in the case of a sixty-year-old man and his family, who were cut from the housing program as their income exceeded the three-minimum-wage threshold. I also discuss the moral negotiations that unfolded as leaders sought to keep this family engaged in the collective dream of homeownership.

5 Deferred hope

I was introduced to Seu Miguel by Marilia, the president of the housing association, in May 2013. Back then, Seu Miguel and his wife received us in the living room of his old home, a makeshift shack on Maria da Conceição hill, just a few miles from where Residencial Bento Gonçalves was being finalized. They were eager to share their plans for moving.

During our conversation, Seu Miguel did not speak much. Fifteen years earlier, the former metalsmith had suffered a stroke that had left part of his body paralyzed, and he was now retired. Like many other poor Brazilians, he had moved to Porto Alegre by the age of 21 in search of a job and upward social mobility but wound up settling in what was then a peripheral and largely undeveloped area of the city called Partenon, with no public infrastructure for sewage or drinking water or even electricity. He and his wife invested their meager savings to build a two-room home, first a wooden hut [*casa de madeira*] and later transforming it into a brick house [*casa de material*]. Many others did the same, and the area rapidly grew into a complex patchwork of self-built homes, very similar in shape to the *favelas* of Rio de Janeiro (Caldeira 2017). "Villagers [*o povo da vila*] are like the Red Ovenbird [*João-de-Barro*]," Seu Miguel remembers, "they keep building annexes [*puxadinho*]: wherever there is some space, as the family grows, to the top, to the sides …"

The existing infrastructure, however precarious, came to be thanks to community efforts to lay underground water and sewage pipes. Because they are undersized, these pipes tend to clog up daily. In such cases, neighbors call the appropriate municipal division, which takes days to respond, leaving behind foul-smelling and muddy alleyways. Similarly, most of the electricity installations are the result of makeshift and irregular extensions [*gatos*, in the colloquial jargon] erected over decades of state disregard. As hundreds of shacks feed from only one circuit breaker installed at the entrance to the complex, power outages are a daily annoyance, the wife added. I notice Seu Miguel's eyes are distant; he seems distressed. "There are only a few of us here who pay our duties as citizens. Most benefit from our kindheartedness, stealing water and electricity from us." Living amid entrenched precariousness, Seu Miguel clings to moral attributes to differentiate himself from the undeserving poor around him. "That's why our electricity bill is always too high," he says. He then alludes to comments made by municipal officials in response to neighbors' requests. "They say there are too many tangled wires. But we keep on living this way. What can we do?" he asks.

Dissatisfaction with their current place of residence did not end there. The wife points to the lingering effects of rain, which brings all sorts of debris, trash, and mud downhill in a swirling torrent right into the house. One day, Seu Miguel interjects, rainwater flooded the entire hut, leaving couch, mattresses, and other items permanently soaked after floating for hours in the water. In the same breath he continues: "It's been a while that we've wanted to leave this place. When MCMV was announced, I felt, for the first time, there was a real opportunity to pursue a better life upon something rightfully mine," referring to the "squatted" land and his yearning for tenancy.

Marilia interrupts the account with reference to Seu Miguel's clearly degraded living conditions, her role as community leader, and local instances of state bureaucracy. First, she reminds the family that much of their dissatisfaction has in fact been addressed by Marilia in her political brokerage as the head of Codespa within the city's participatory budgeting scheme. She then volunteers members of her entourage, including her brother, a retired electrician, to help with emergencies or small fixtures in the house. Finally, she summarizes her own perception of Seu Miguel's situation: "We have at least three kinds of *social risk* being enacted here," she says, using a term widely deployed by street-level bureaucrats and social workers to qualify housing vulnerability. "First, there is the issue of the quality of the house. Then, there is the social risk: Seu Miguel is an elderly man, partially disabled due to a stroke. And if you look into the ethnic question, then he checks all boxes."

In this short yet powerful intervention, the leader intentionally mixes official eligibility criteria for the housing program with the moral injunctions informally established by the housing association to monitor and rank their members and grant them housing units. She notes several ways Seu Miguel made himself visible in this model community: by being a constant presence at the association's meetings and social gatherings, by earnestly paying membership dues, and by cultivating good relationships with other

members and leaders. On top of all this, she gestures, if Seu Miguel was prepared to do so, he could capitalize on his ethnicity, advice she also passed on to several other African-Brazilians as both a form of historical compensation and racial pride.

Seu Miguel proceeds to talk about how he was found and recruited by Codespa leaders in 2009. Marilia intervenes again to explain that she had ventured into even the farthest peripheries of the Partenon neighborhood to enlist families to mobilize for housing units. During meetings, while members and newcomers waited to own their first home, they received strategic information on how to become and remain a public housing beneficiary – from bureaucratic procedures to practical knowledge on condominium bylaws and sociability. While proudly recounting her role in bringing qualification to her community of chosen beneficiaries, Marilia also reviewed the trajectory that made her into a reputable community leader and all she envisaged for the model association in the years to come: "We are going to live in a centrally located and highly valued area. Everybody will be looking to see how we'll fare. And once they build a shopping mall in the vicinity, our real estate value will skyrocket!"

Once again, the leader mixes social housing with the projected economic value that would accrue with market speculation in the region. As I learned over the course of my interactions with Marilia, the objective was not to persuade members to marketize their social assets but rather to encourage them to perceive their symbolic and social travails through a language of economic worth, in which the house was the rightful reward for years of yearning and painstaking efforts to mobilize. While listening to Marilia's words, Seu Miguel's wife had been imagining her new domestic environment, crowded with consumer objects and the advantages of living by the asphalt. "Every time I pass by the construction site I stare longingly at the apartments. I can't believe I will be catching a bus just across the street …"

Marilia clears her throat and takes the conversation in another direction. She is also the bearer of bad news. The list of selected members to become housing beneficiaries she submitted for screening to Caixa Econômica Federal, the federal bank in charge of issuing mortgages, had been returned with several problems. Seu Miguel was among the candidates with registration issues; at the bank, his family income had been calculated to be roughly 800 dollars a month, hence above the limit of three minimum wages. "Everybody at Codespa was taken by surprise," Marilia continues, as nobody on the board knew Seu Miguel was married. "I've heard of people getting divorced to split their incomes. This is what the system does! Had you not been married on paper, we could gladly omit this information from your application. There is nothing wrong with omitting for the greater cause. It's all the system's fault anyways."

Marilia keeps talking, trying to free herself from being made responsible for Seu Miguel's exclusion, while he sits on the couch and stares fixedly at a point on the wall. His wife brings papers from their retirement pensions, and they determine their joint income was indeed 150 dollars above the threshold.

Marilia insists that "social programs are designed to be manipulated." She backs her strong argument with her perception that many beneficiaries in other projects had been paid to act as straw men and were replaced immediately after the projects were in place with the "real" occupiers: families earning two or three times the limit for social housing and ready to become the lawful owners once the apartments were available to be sold on the market.[4] "I don't like the idea that just because we are poor we have to present ourselves as suffering subjects to the state, but in this case his disabled condition helps us plead for an accessible unit on the first floor. Unfortunately, we have to fight to prove [*tem que brigar para provar*]."

Seu Miguel ponders all these comments. When he finally speaks, he says that he will not give up. "I will continue to attend the gatherings, to meet with Marilia; I won't give up. We will fight. For I hope to go live there one day as well." In his view, the documental inconsistencies in his application do not represent endpoints. Rather, they are swiftly transformed into openings for new forms of subjectivation capable of keeping him engaged with the association's collective project of upward mobility. The vocabulary of personal worth through struggle that had made him into a desired housing activist would remain part and parcel of this new subjective reconfiguration.

Seu Miguel's decision to keep going against all odds was indeed Marilia's greatest accomplishment as a community leader. Her utmost challenge was to bridge the grammar of the law and the contingent political decisions made in backstage agreements – which sometimes led to the exclusion of entire sections of her constituency due to changes in the municipality's strategic priorities to accommodate relocations in other parts of the city – without significantly infringing on the local moralities espoused by members of her association.

We can think of the ways in which this structure of governance is activated to steer people's expectations as "deferred hope": despite falling back into structural uncertainty, Seu Miguel's condition is neither one of unfreedom (Sen 2000) nor of frustrated freedom (Victor et al. 2013), for he is still persuaded by local leaders to keep his hopes alive and forward-looking. Even as he returns to negative, or unrealized, hope, he is given the tools to envision a future that is no longer reducible to the past-oriented tropes of infrastructure that marked his life in the hills. Deferred hope is thus a form of inhabiting a slippery future while simultaneously embracing the ever-changing and contingent uncertainties of the present.

To maintain social ties, Marilia draws the contours of an imagined community of deferred hopers: she mentions other cases of families excluded due to minor differences in income; she describes their suffering and disintegrating living conditions; she stresses

4 Because MCMV mortgages are 10-year subsidized contracts, units can only be sold as market assets after that period.

their resilience and capacity to play the role of the idealized subject of aid the state expects them to be; and she reaffirms her allegiance to local senses of justice.

The latter point meant that Marilia knew she could not leave without offering an alternative. "How can we guarantee his rights in face of unfavorable state regulations?" she asks, looking around at her small audience. Spotting the couple's oldest daughter in the corner, she draws her into the conversation. "Come closer, daughter. I'm sure you are aware of your parents' plight. We are trying to reverse the state's decision, which is based on an unfair criterion. It's not our will. Our own sole criterion is participation, and your parents excel at it." After a short pause, she carries on: "You are single and don't earn more than three minimum wages, right? If I *could* revert this apartment unit to your name, would you be willing to let your parents live there?"

Marilia's impromptu proposal catches everybody off guard. An awkward silence follows. She resumes pitching the idea: she would soon meet with the head of the Municipal Housing Department and she could pull some strings. "Here we are obliged to make arrangements in order to guarantee their rights." Besides, she reasons, the daughter had nothing to lose. "You will be the only heir and won't need to share the apartment with your siblings in case – God forbid – your parents pass away." She gives it some time before concluding: "If you agree, I'll have to collect your paperwork, register you with the housing association and the Housing Department ASAP. We have to move fast. But this is the only Plan B I envisage."

Astonished, the daughter sits motionless and does not know how to respond. With a similar demeanor, Seu Miguel intervenes, nodding his head in agreement. "It's the only sensible thing to do," he mumbles. Marilia does not waste time and pushes for the documents. She also urges the daughter to get registered in the unified social database at the local branch of the state's social assistance foundation, through which housing beneficiaries were monitored and filtered. "It's time for her to do her part," she wraps up. Turning to me, she adds that "there are a lot of lies in this process," and talks profusely about the political games played by the Housing Department in the process of allocating Residencial Bento Gonçalves' 540 apartments. "I need them to disclose the full list of nominees. I want to know how many other mismatches there are so we can pledge to have our people indicated for more units. We know that for the poor everything is more difficult. In the end, it all boils down to political will."

Later on that same day, I learned that Marilia was an ingenious calculator of people's urgency. Not every person was given the same prerogative as Seu Miguel. In her quest to build the model community, Marilia reckoned that some could afford to wait longer than others. She applied the same everyday discretionary reasoning to another case of income-based exclusion from the program, which she also shared with me: "A mother and daughter living together, earning 350 dollars a month each. Their situation is not as severe. When evaluating vulnerability, one has to take into account people's capacity to wait and hope [*esperar*]. One has to work with *the idea of time*."

Seu Miguel and his wife continued to attend the association's meetings and social gatherings, despite his exclusion from the program. In public, Marilia was very vocal in praising his resilience and will to thrive. Despite the leader's insistence, the couple's daughter did not embark on the idea of switching the ownership of the apartment. Seu Miguel was now hoping to get his paperwork fixed to become available for a second phase of the project, a far-fetched idea Marilia advertised to all disallowed members to keep them engaged. To this date, almost five years after the opening of Residencial Bento Gonçalves, no official announcements have been made about the construction of the project's purported second edition.

6 Economic mediants

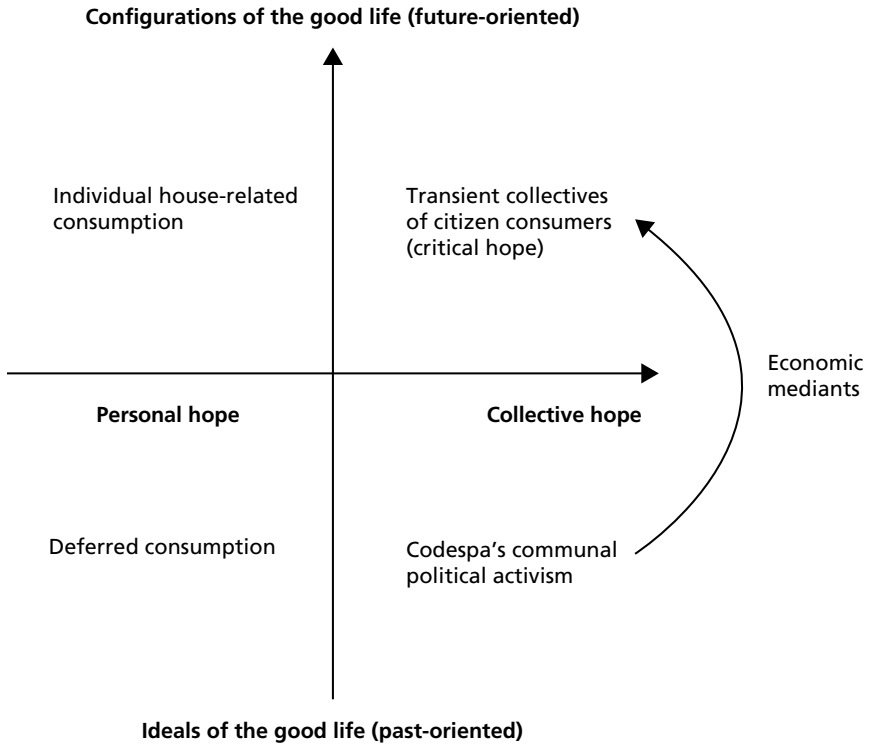
As seen so far, the materialities of participation (including state-issued paperwork and the bottom-up bureaucracies of housing associations) operate as mediants (Appadurai 2015) between people's private hope and their collectively orchestrated experience of everyday housing membership. Once selected beneficiaries moved to Residencial Bento Gonçalves, in September 2014, materials and artifacts also became key indexers of their house-related consumption.

This process is made possible by Minha Casa Melhor, a governmental credit line with low interest rates and a pre-approved limit of some 2,000 dollars, geared at beneficiaries for furnishing their apartments. Low-income consumption is key in the reconfiguration of material hope, as inclusion in a booming credit economy enables beneficiaries to realize their ideals of the good life through objects, their affects, and the "textilities of making" (Ingold 2014), thereby transforming the private and collective architectures of the built environment.

In Brazil's social housing market, economic mediants associate ideals of the good life with contingent and practical constellations of aspiration, autonomy, and critical consumerism. They provide an economic moral language that includes prioritizing, calculating, and re-adjusting expectations that redefine the experience of everyday sociality. Mediants also make it possible for residents to fulfill their ideals of privacy and comfort by connecting them to structures of opportunity and by lending them a sense of attainability that produces new future expectations and anxieties, such as indebtedness and securitization.

Figure 2 illustrates the dynamics of hope as it intersects with the pursuit of the good life among dwellers of Residencial Bento Gonçalves. People have idealized future expectations, which are linked to socially constructed pasts; their temporality is thus uncompromising and past-oriented, rooted in accrued class structures, and only loosely articulated into present-day contingencies. Economic mediants – consumption objects

Figure 2 Social interaction between hope, wellbeing, and consumption



and their affective and pedagogical dimensions (Larkin 2013, 333) – create enduring channels through which such normative ideals are translated into configurations of the good life. Material hope activates new prospective temporalities as people wrestle with emerging and yet unforeseen futures that pour into the house through the pervasiveness of economic objects.

Minha Casa Melhor is supposed to minimize the social and financial impacts of moving. Yet as I learned from Mr. Silva, the manager of a big retail store in Porto Alegre, the credit program also carried a pedagogical dimension: by using and inhabiting the house, beneficiaries would learn how to make their desires and expectations fit within their domestic budgets and the physical limits of the new units. All 540 MCMV apartments in Residencial Bento Gonçalves follow a standard architectural plot that includes two bedrooms, a bathroom, a laundry area, and a shared kitchen and living space. They are organized into several towers placed side by side and surrounded by common areas with game courts, party saloons, and facilities such as plazas and benches to foster conviviality.

Through their particular design as gated projects, architects say, MCMV initiatives intend to generate a purified and disciplined community life. Key to this endeavor is the way the credit program is designed. Minha Casa Melhor distinguishes between fourteen different categories of goods, each of which specifies a price cap limiting how much

beneficiaries can spend per item (see Appendix). In order, for example, to use all available credit, beneficiaries are forced to diversify their purchases and encouraged to think of the house as a holistic space where ideas of comfort, wellbeing, and privacy would intersect. "Ultimately, it boils down to having a more comfortable general domestic environment," Mr. Silva told me in a conversation. "People need to learn how to manage their money; they need to learn how to consume, and we are here to help. We believe in the social nature of this economic project."

In these interactions, I learned that Bachelard's phenomenology of the house as a "topography of our intimate being" (1958, 36) is indeed connected to practical decisions about consumption and money allocation. Here, monetary limits and credit instruments are powerful openings into the worlds of desire, aspiration, agency, fairness, and dignity that make up people's pursuit of the good life. Reconstructing the social life of these materialities and the ways monetary thresholds work in practice allows us to trace the turning points where the political and planned dimensions of consumption meet the poetic and affective realities of objects on the ground.

The next section briefly discusses the case of Tio Paulinho, a long-standing Codespa leader, as he traverses different registers of hope: from his private aspirations for a better life, to his political role in the association, to his new travails as a homeowner within Residencial Bento Gonçalves. As we shall see, the temporalities of waiting and hoping for the future are unleashed through his dealings with the ubiquitous political and economic mediants.

7 The double temporalities of hope

Tio Paulinho is a sixty-five-year-old man who became famous after moving to the construction site in 2013 and residing in a storage container for months before the condominium was ready for habitation. Living amid debris, he put together a makeshift office and attended to the association's members as they called or visited for updates on the construction. In January 2015, I visited Tio Paulinho in his new apartment. Anyone familiar with his humble living conditions in the container would have been hard pressed to recognize the elegantly dressed man standing before me. A comfortable environment, crowded with technological objects, emerged in lieu of sand and debris. Tio Paulinho even brought along the stray dog that kept him company while he lived by himself at the construction site. The animal was now groomed, leashed, and elevated to pet status by his owner.

Tio Paulinho envisaged new everyday responsibilities for himself as the owner of a condo. He developed a critical stance on the condominium's problems and expressed them in a language of informed consumerism. Such as the day when he overheard gatekeepers calling the project "Carandiru," the name of Latin America's once largest prison.

Tio Paulinho confronted the company's manager, who played down the episode as a misunderstanding. "No, it was not. It got to everybody's ears. We are *consumers* of your services. We are paying you, and you give us defamation in return. Did you not know that we have the right to sue?!" Tio Paulinho paused his narrative for a moment, smiled back at me, and lowered his voice: "They were not expecting me to use these fancy little words though …" Here, we can see traces of how hope is again retooled. Tio Paulinho's capacity to continue aspiring becomes critical hope, a quality that helped people organize in temporary collectives to navigate the imperfections of this emerging low-income market for goods and services to realize their ideals of the good life.

In 2017, three years after he had moved in, I met with Tio Paulinho once again in his apartment. At that point, Brazil's political and economic crisis, which had begun in 2014 with GNP growth coming to a halt and crested in 2016 with the impeachment of President Dilma Rousseff, had deepened its roots. As many of the redistributive gains achieved between 2003 and 2014 started to wither, Tio Paulinho worried about increasing familial indebtedness. His daughter, an unemployed mother of six, had moved to another MCMV project but was no longer able to keep up with the costs. Tio Paulinho decided to accommodate her family until things got better. Electricity and water bills, however, tripled in cost. Meanwhile, he had been wrestling with credit card bills, growing condominium fees, and apartment mortgages. As time progressed and Brazil's economy plunged into recession, his financial situation worsened. Tio Paulinho was forced to adopt new and more pragmatic calculations of his domestic finances. Interestingly, he prioritized the payment of water, electricity, and condominium balances, which reflected his attempt to secure the autonomy, privacy, and respectability that his new domestic environment had granted him.

Following implementation of the housing program, I am interested in how these tangled worlds of hope and material affects – however fragile and unruly – are woven into transitory communities of belonging and wellbeing. As residents wrestle with emerging problems such as indebtedness and security, transient collectives are crucial to balance collective expectations and to maintain everyday hope in the homeownership dream in the face of grueling decisions about bill payments, furniture, or the installation of fences and security devices. These affective materialities mediate intimate and communal spaces, reshuffle sociability, and re-ground political activism within the private spaces of the condominium.

I also move between private affects and collective forms of sociability to document a wider politics of upward mobility. As mentioned earlier, I suggest that we think of the images and affects that mediate the experience of class mobility – and its particular dynamics of distinction and inclusion, hierarchy and aspiration – in terms of a middle-class sensorial (Kopper 2019). Let us consider, for example, Tio Paulinho's comment about the temporalities of class, which opens this paper. Here, the imagined "Others" are not situated above and below the speakers, as in an abstract and hierarchical stratification system. Instead, they emerge as moving positionalities within an affective geog-

raphy of horizontal forces: the rich neighborhoods versus the impoverished hills, spaces of a before and an after. The class sensorial that emerges from these aspirational experiments with the past and the future is both linked to a wider constellation of inter-class imaginaries and seeks to transcend them. To this effect, the work of time is crucial, as it illuminates how expectations and hopes shift, how it informs an ethics of possibility, and how it modulates subjective transformation.

As I move back and forth in time and space to capture the turning points of personal and collective hope – and their mobilization by new key actors in charge of the administration of the condominium – I reconstitute some of the dilemmas involved in long-term place-making. Time and again, Codespa's beneficiaries are reminded of their own exceptionality as model citizens. The politics of worthiness guiding the purification and juxtaposition of dreams and hopes during the years of political activism is now indexed by surveillance services and their material ubiquity. This spatially mapped infrastructural citizenship takes the form of inclusion in networks of goods and services hailed by concerns of securitization, consumer rights, and protection against the shadows of their own past. Too often, the specter of the hilltops – its phantasmic "Other" – lurks among the murky corridors and corners of Residencial Bento Gonçalves.

8 Hereafter

What do the long-term horizons of public policy implementation and the constellations of political and economic subjective transformation tell us about the limits of a nationwide developmental project based on the diffusion, administration, and local implementation of a politics of hope? Can they explain the recent political events in Brazil, including the massive popular upheavals of 2013; the recurrent outcries against corruption and for workable public infrastructures and services; the progressive destruction of the Left; the acute contempt for all things political; and the sharp turn to far-right politics instantiated in the election of President Jair Bolsonaro?

Almost certainly, they cannot. But they can illuminate the fraught politics of post-neoliberal middle-class makings, which crested during the years preceding and leading to the shift in national politics. Indeed, a broader point I make throughout this paper is that the politics of hope buttressing these middle-class makings creates multi-scalar, albeit temporary, alignments across trickle-down policy implementations, state and market narratives, and bottom-up grassroots activism; and across a wide spectrum of instruments, designs, rationalities, institutions, community organisms, and activist citizens. A politics of hope seeks to widen Hirschman's (2013) idea of "possibilism" as "a passion for the possible" that can expand the contours of political and economic action in development.

In the post-neoliberal politics of hope eventuated by MCMV, real estate investors, constructors, state representatives, community leaders, and activist citizens were brought together via institutional channels of policy implementation. Momentarily they created enduring and overlapping scales of connection whereby political, economic, institutional, and subjective hope was organized, molded, and woven into a pervasive project of collaborative development. In this sense, a politics of hope encompasses opportunity structures and intervention technologies that make change possible as much as it activates people's expectations for better and yet unforeseen futures.

In order to remain functional, a politics of hope grows on a shared sense of attainability – the possibility that, against all odds, change will find a way. As a temporal narrative of progress, hope hinges – despite socioeconomic disparities – on a more or less even distribution across the social fabric. It is, in this sense, a matter of everyday persuasion as much as it is linked to the development of "the capacity to aspire" (Appadurai 2013). Yet in the local infrastructures of hope I encountered in Porto Alegre, material hope was not made available for all. Through its manifold diffractions and translations – from personal hope to a collective navigational capability to critical hope – exclusionary forms of waiting and hoping for housing units went hand in hand with clientelistic politics, patronage, and favoritism, which also prompted forms of deferred hope as many were excluded from the program or, once in the projects, were unable to engage in consumer markets to fulfill their ideals of the good life.

Furthermore, infrastructural citizenship, or the prospects to stake a claim to social membership based on the selective allocation of a house, produced a pragmatic form of material hope that allows individuals to engage with the outcomes of public policies without necessarily creating the infrastructures of aspiration that allow them to remain subjectively engaged around a long-term project of collective transformation. Codespa's challenge – to remain a relevant collective in the years following the political mobilization that led members to Residencial Bento Gonçalves – is indeed the quandary of many grassroots organizations nationwide. Relocated to their new homes and learning how to grapple with their new economic realities, beneficiaries developed a sense of domesticity and privacy that actualized Codespa's project of upward mobility as an ongoing journey towards middle-class financialization and respectability, but without embracing its political principle of advocating housing for all.

Similarly, as both my 2015 and 2017 sociodemographic surveys reveal, political subjectivity remains ambiguous: while 78 percent of the heads of household voted for the Workers' Party (PT) in the 2014 national elections and were against Dilma Rousseff's impeachment, over 80 percent had not taken part in any demonstration during the previous years, and over 90 percent are not affiliated with any political party.[5] Furthermore, my ethnographic records indicate widespread criticism of some of PT's social

5 The rare cases of political affiliation refer to the center-right Partido do Movimento Democrático Brasileiro/Party of the Brazilian Democratic Movement (PMDB), the party of former presi-

policies (including MCMV) and entrenched corruption. The sense of political abjection and turn towards privacy also reflect people's own perception of safety and skepticism towards key democratic institutions: over 75 percent distrust Congress, the president, governors, mayors, and municipal authorities, while feeling secure in their private new apartments, trusting only kin and friends (building managers and community leaders show a surprisingly high rate of distrust at around 40 percent), and rejecting party politics (71 percent).

Following the move to Residencial Bento Gonçalves, the capacity to aspire conflated with the capacity to critically engage with the limitations of consumption markets, and political activism transfigured into the private and everyday territories of wellbeing. As in a utopian private democracy of sorts, temporarily organized collectives of consumer citizens contended with emerging issues, such as planting vegetation or installing security and surveillance systems, in the hope of securing the continuity of their homeownership dreams.

To summarize, then, this hybrid system of material hope that succeeded in producing temporary alignments between political discourses of development, middle-class makings, and bottom-up mobilization also generated ambivalent political and economic subjectivities, whose capacity to act on their own (political and economic) futures remains, to the greatest extent, structurally uncertain. Yet the convergence of a politics of hope produced widespread *expectations* of attainability through the double temporalities inherent to hope. Housing associations and their infrastructures of participation linked people's past of suffering to prospective (and potentially attainable) futures. As community leaders and state officials maneuvered with past and future temporalities, they justified exclusions and re-engaged people's hope to wait for the future. In this process, people's resilience was continuously engaged, as were the abilities to transition between forms of generative hope and to reorient the targets of hope.

Hope – and the sociotechnical processes pertaining to its maintenance, reproduction, and effacement – brings these seemingly opposite temporalities together. It draws on past structures of opportunity and desire and reorients its focus towards yet unforeseen futures. It creates new lines of flight that have the potential to dislodge class positionalities. Hope is the driving force – made operational by social infrastructures of power and sociability – that connects utopian pasts – rooted in entrenched social, moral, and economic hierarchies – to prospective tropes of desire.

The new facets and qualities of hope in Brazil – whether they will transcend the scope and limitations of material inclusion to encompass insurgent forms of producing political and economic consciousness – are set to play an even more important role in the years to come. Will the undoing of social, economic, and racial rights be tantamount to

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dent Michel Temer, who has – alongside other leading political figures, such as Lula (PT) – been facing major charges in Brazil's years-long corruption investigation.

backsliding into old-fashioned forms of hoping, experiencing, and contesting inequality, or will the politics of hope take on new counter-insurgent dynamics as poor Brazilians wrestle with the effects of Jair Bolsonaro's government? Whatever the outcome, it will provide an insight into the depth and resilience of the politics of material hope that prevailed for over a decade in this utmost "country of the future."

Appendix

Category of goods	Price cap
Wardrobe	R$ 700 [US$ 285]
Full bed (with or without mattress)	R$ 500 [US$ 204]
Twin bed (with or without mattress)	R$ 400 [US$ 163]
Dining table with chairs	R$ 400 [US$ 163]
Couch	R$ 600 [US$ 245]
Shelf or rack	R$ 350 [US$ 143]
Kitchen furniture	R$ 600 [US$ 245]
Refrigerator	R$ 1090 [US$ 445]
Stove	R$ 599 [US$ 245]
Microwave	R$ 350 [US$ 143]
Automatic washing machine	R$ 1100 [US$ 449]
Flat-screen TV	R$ 1400 [US$ 571]
Computer or laptop, wireless-ready	R$ 1150 [US$ 470]
Tablet (7", 8 GB, camera, wi-fi)	R$ 800 [US$ 326]

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