

BOWLER'S VIEW AND ACCURATE MAP OF THE WORLD, OR TERRESTRIAL GLOBE, laid down from the BEST OBSERVATIONS and NEWEST DISCOVERIES; particularly those of the late ADMIRAL COOK, and other celebrated CIRCUMNAVIGATORS: Illustrated with a variety of useful PROJECTIONS and REPRESENTATIONS of the HEAVENLY BODIES: the most approved, ASTRONOMICAL and GEOGRAPHICAL DEFINITIONS, TABLES, and PROBLEMS. With an easy and familiar Explanation of the most curious and interesting PHENOMENA in the UNIVERSAL SYSTEM.



Mega-Cities & Mega-Events:

Lessons from Favelas for the Future

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Author Background

Molly Martin, a recent Trilingual MBA graduate at the University of Kansas, participated as a fellow in the FMSO-Kansas University (KU) Global Security Internship program from January through May 2012. Combining her extensive background in Latin American Studies with her economic and business education, Ms. Martin focused her research for this program on the impact of both poverty and wealth on Brazil's security – particularly as the country is set to host two international sporting events in 2014 and 2016.

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Introduction by Ray Finch, FMSO

Brazil has one of the fastest developing economies in the world, and, according to some analysts, now ranks at number six on the global economic scale (after the U.S., China, Japan, India, Germany, and Russia). Alongside this impressive economic growth is the increasing urbanization of the country's population. Unfortunately for Brazil, economic progress has not increased along an equal pattern in its growing cities, and in major urban areas like São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro huge slums or favelas have accompanied this development. This concentration of poverty adjacent to great wealth has the potential to lead to instability, particularly during major sporting events. This brief study will examine how the current Brazilian government is addressing these challenges in preparation for the FIFA 2014 World Cup and the 2016 Olympic and Paralympic Games. It will also touch upon how favelas are portrayed within popular Brazilian media.

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We are working in a way that the state is present in the day-to-day life of poor people...In the past it was only the police intervening with lots of brutality...[now] we have the biggest investment program of shanty-town urbanization, basic sanitation and house building that Brazil has ever had.



Downtown region of São Paulo city, Brazil. In the foreground, the Itália building, Oscar Niemeyer's COPAN (ondulated one) and the former Hilton Hotel (cylindrical one) can be seen. Photo by Jurema Oliveira [CC-BY-SA], via Wikimedia Commons

- President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, *quoted by Doug Sanderson, Arrival City: How the Largest Migration in History Is Reshaping Our World.*

Urban Shifts

In 1950 the world was home to 86 cities with a population of over one million. In 2006 there were 400 such cities. By 2015 there will be over 550. Eventually, large urban centers are expected to account for all of the world's population growth, which is anticipated to peak around ten billion by 2050.¹ By 2050 the human species will finally be almost entirely urban. The shift from rural, agricultural life to cities will be the final human movement of this size and scope. In fact, there has not been such a massive migration movement since between the late eighteenth and early twentieth centuries from Europe to the New World.²

As the world's population grows, so will the prevalence of the new urban phenomenon: mega-cities. Mega-cities are defined as any city with a population of over ten million people.

Today there are 21 megacities, which is expected to increase to 27 by 2025.³ Mega-cities present

¹ Davis, *Planet of Slums*, 1–2.

² Saunders, *Arrival City: How the Largest Migration in History Is Reshaping Our World*, 1.

³ *Press Conference on World Urbanization Prospects.*



This image of Earth's city lights was created with data from the Defense Meteorological Satellite Program (DMSP) Operational Linescan System (OLS). Originally designed to view clouds by moonlight, the OLS is also used to map the locations of permanent lights on the Earth's surface. Photo Credit: Data courtesy Marc Imhoff of NASA GSFC and Christopher Elvidge of NOAA NGDC. Image by Craig Mayhew and Robert Simmon, NASA GSFC

significant challenges for governments, environmentalists, architects, and, most importantly, the inhabitants of the cities. One frequently discussed negative externality of mega-cities is the development of shanty towns. Shanty towns, which are also called slums, squatter towns and favelas, form around the outskirts of major cities. Shanties are improvised, informal dwellings that are normally inhabited by the poor, who have flocked to these mega-cities to find opportunity. Today they are home to approximately one-sixth of the world's population.⁴

South America is considered to be the first fully urbanized continent within the developing world and is several decades ahead of Asia and Africa. Latin America is currently the home to four mega-cities, two of which, São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, are located in Brazil.⁵ As Brazil continuously works to combat urbanization problems (such as the lack of adequate housing, employment, security and services), fully developed nations of the world are welcoming Brazil into the global economy and congratulating the country on its progress. As the world's sixth largest economy, Brazil has an increasingly assertive role in global affairs. Moreover, it is home to extensive exploitable oil reserves and a surging middle class. Brazil is one of the few

4 Ablett, *All About Shantytowns*.

5 Saunders, *Arrival City: How the Largest Migration in History Is Reshaping Our World*, 74.

countries in the world to have a female president, Dilma Rousseff. On April 9, 2012, President Rousseff made her first visit to the White House to meet with President Barack Obama, who made positive comments regarding Brazil's progress.⁶

Despite its development, Brazil still maintains a legacy of social and economic injustices, which can be seen through massive income inequalities and social exclusion. These perceived injustices are a cause of crime, and need to be addressed with genuine and long-term policies. If the state is able to increase opportunities for education, training, and employment, it will reduce the likelihood of criminal acts like murder, assault, and armed robbery. .

Brazil's Good Fortune

Despite its urbanization problems, Brazil was chosen to be the host of two upcoming mega-events: the Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) 2014 World Cup and the 2016 Olympic and Paralympic Games. The World Cup will be played out in twelve different Brazilian cities: Belo Horizonte, Brasília, Cuiabá, Curitiba, Fortaleza, Manaus, Natal, Porto Alegre, Recife, Rio de Janeiro, Salvador, and São Paulo. Each stadium is anticipated to host 40,000-60,000 guests. The 2016 Olympic Games will be played in Rio de Janeiro, the first South American city to host the Olympics.



The most recent mega-events hosted in Brazil were the 1950 World Cup, the 1963 Pan-American Games and the 2007 Pan-American Games. The 2007 Games were hosted in Rio, and sold a total of 1.3 million tickets. These latter games were used as propaganda to demonstrate Brazil's capabilities and to secure itself as the host of the upcoming World Cup and Olympics. The propaganda worked.

⁶ "Obama."

Governments typically frame and justify mega-events as a “public good,” which will create new opportunities and benefits for the nation as a whole. Historically, the sporting experience has demonstrated three key uses of major games or events: to create social cohesion through a shared identity, to mitigate social discontent through distraction, and to solidify power through increased political support.⁷ Aside from instilling pride in the host country and solidifying its role as a global power, some have suggested that these games can serve as a grand distraction for the impoverished millions.

The most recognized reasons for hosting mega-events are to increase global exposure and economic development. Mega-events have the potential to create a better, more positive country image in the media. The coverage of the events will not only focus on sports, but will also focus the world’s attention on the host country in general. The 2008 Beijing Olympics gave the Chinese government the opportunity to show the city off and to depict China as a modernized country. The 2010 South Africa World Cup gave the government the chance to present itself as a country that was prepared to be a player in the global economy by successfully managing the large and complex event. Brazil, however, has already been legitimized as an economic and political power, so these events offer it the opportunity to solidify its role as a major global political and economic influence. Brazil is looking forward to the kick-start that the upcoming events are expected to give its economy and development. This will not come without a cost though, since large investments must first be made into Brazil’s infrastructure, stadiums and social projects in preparation.

Security issues appear to be the biggest barrier to Brazil’s potential progress. Since the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, increased public fears of potential attacks have caused security operations and costs to rise dramatically. The International Olympic Committee (IOC) requires the host country of the Games to provide a safe environment for the “Olympic Family,” which includes competitors, spectators, participants, and officials. For Brazil, the most apparent security threat resides in the favelas.⁸

7 Riegel, “Keeping Score in the 2010 World Cup: How Do Sports Mega-Events Compete with Pro-Poor Development?,” 10.

8 Richards, Fussey, and Silke, *Terrorism and the Olympics: Major Event Security and Lessons for the Future*, 118.



A favela child winds a kite string in Cordoeira, Nova Friburgo, Brazil. Photo by Nate Cull [CC-BY-SA-2.0], via <http://www.flickr.com/photos/natecull/3647271/>

Favelas

The definition of a favela has changed over time, but it has almost always been interpreted with a negative connotation. A favela is typically defined by Brazilian society as follows: “[A favela] stands in Brazil for a poor segregated area in the city and it is often seen contradictorily as an area of solidarity and sociability, but where violence, associated to drug dealing, is present in everyday life.”⁹

The Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística (IBGE) (Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics) technically defines a favela as a subnormal agglomerate with a minimum of 51 household units. The subnormal agglomerates are in need of essential public services, are urbanized out of the legal standards, occupy or have occupied a third-party property (public or private) and are arranged in a disordered and dense way. The IBGE has identified that

⁹ Valladeres, *Social Science Representations of Favelas in Rio De Janeiro: A Historical Perspective*, 2.

Brazil is home to 6,329 of these subnormal agglomerates.¹⁰ The majority of these favelas take root in the outskirts of large cities, like São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro.

A less formal definition by Saunders identifies favelas as self-built slums which are polarized by society into one image, like that shown in the popular film *City of God* and in endless television reports. These reports identify favelas as places of perpetual violence populated by a lost lower class.¹¹ Today many favelas lack basic services, such as electricity, sanitation and water, and their inhabitants face widespread discrimination. For instance, only 67% of favelas have a sewer system.¹² Favelas are popularly seen as a space for the city's bums and troublemakers, and commonly referred to by metaphors like "cancer" and "wound."¹³

A more comprehensive definition, given by the Observatoria de Favelas (OB), defines them, in sum, as a territory where there is recurring deficiency of state action and formal market investments, where the housing is mostly characterized by illegality and self-construction, and where great cultural diversity coexists.¹⁴

When studying and comparing favelas, it is important to remember that favelas are not one monolithic entity; they are different and separate communities that can be isolated or interconnected and adjacent to others. In Rio de Janeiro, for example, Rocinha (Brazil's largest favela) is a single subnormal agglomerate, while Morro do Alemão forms an area interconnected to nine other agglomerates (Itararé, Joaquim de Queiroz, Morro da Baiana, Morro das Palmeiras, Mourão Filho, Nova Brasília, Parque Alvorada, Relicário and Vila Matinha).¹⁵ While the favelas are more similar than dissimilar to one another regarding social challenges, they are distinguished by their geographic locations, origin of inhabitants, and age of settlement.

10 "Censo Demografico 2010."

11 Saunders, *Arrival City: How the Largest Migration in History Is Reshaping Our World*, 71.

12 "Social Communication."

13 *They Came in Shooting*, 3.

14 Turcheti e Melo, "Public Policy for the Favelas in Rio De Janeiro: The Problem (in) Framing," 13.

15 "Censo Demografico 2010."

Drugs, Crime and Corruption

Favelas are commonly perceived as problem areas regarding hygiene, aesthetics, and escalating population growth. These factors especially irritate the elite urban classes. More recently, however, the attention on favelas has centered on security concerns, especially in terms of the upcoming mega-events. Drug trafficking, violent crimes and police corruption are three of the most grave security concerns that the favelas present. Police corruption, which is commonly believed to have reinforced the power of Rio's drug gangs, takes on many forms, often involving police selling weapons, protecting gangs, and tipping off favela dwellers before an operation.¹⁶ There is a misperception in Brazil that human rights and public security do not go hand in hand. This is the most likely cause of the high rates of police abuse.¹⁷

The armed drug lords have limited the access of the state to the favelas and have silenced the voices of favela dwellers through intimidation and violence. Within the favelas dealers and drug lords have remained highly influential and are often seen as “the good guys” within the communities. Many favela residents have lost faith in the police because of inherent corruption, and prefer the controlled, low-cost protected environment that the drug dealers have provided. A reformed criminal leader further explained the favela politics to an Al Jazeera correspondent: “A few years ago, my friend had his watch stolen. They [gangsters] found the guy who did it and brought him to my friend. They asked ‘Do you want us to cut off one of his fingers?’ The friend declined, but harsh criminal ‘justice’ has been a feature of life in the area.”¹⁸

Although the “lawless” favelas did not have formal police protection previously, criminals did work to keep peace within the favela, either to benefit innocent neighbors or to keep the police out. One criminal leader even banned the highly addictive drug crack cocaine from the Rocinha favela. Despite drug traffickers’ quasi-positive reputation among favela residents, the dealers and criminal groups present serious threats to Brazil’s security. Since the 1980s, the most

16 German, “In Brazil, Taking on Police Corruption.”

17 Suska, “The Surprising Success of the Pacifying Police Unit in Rio De Janeiro,” 21.

18 Arsenault, “Counter-insurgency ‘Improves’ Brazil’s Slums.”

well-known and feared drug organizations in Brazil have been the Comando Vermelho (Red Command), the Terceiro Comando (Third Command), and the Amigos dos Amigos (Friends of Friends). The commandos are organized criminal groups operating within the drug trade, and are based in the favelas. They are known for fighting over authority and territory and for their easy access to heavy arms and large sums of money.¹⁹

Recent shifts in Brazil's criminal landscape have created a competing criminal group; paramilitary militias. The militias are comprised of off-duty police officers and firemen, ex-police, soldiers, civil servants and members of the government. As the government cracks down on favela security, drug gangs are increasingly fleeing the favelas. This process makes room for the militias to enter and to begin to take control and exploit the residents. The militias generally charge residents additional fees for services beyond what they previously had to pay for. The militias extort payments from the favela residents by charging additional protection fees, commissions on water and electricity services, and fees for unlicensed public transportation. The payment for these services, however, does not make its way to the state or to electric companies; it goes into the militia members' pockets. Most shocking of all, the militias carry out extrajudicial killings and harsh punishments to those who cross them. In 2010, 45% of Rio de Janeiro's favelas were considered to be under the control of these militias.²⁰ They have been able to remain in control because of their diverse and complicated connections. Since the militias are often considered "friends of the police," favela residents are too afraid to speak out against them for fear of police reprisals. Municipal Secretary of Housing Jorge Bittar explains: "This is a very serious problem that needs to be addressed not to jeopardize the continuity of the program. Trafficking is a serious problem, no doubt, but the militiamen working along with the direct participation of the police, are making it much harder to fight."²¹

19 Ibid.

20 Romero, "In Brazil, Officers of the Law, Outside the Law."

21 Gaffney, "Militia in Rio's West Zone."



A BOPE officer stands guard over the favela. Photo by the Federal District Military Police, via <http://www.pmdf.df.gov.br/bope/fotos.asp>

Pacification Progress

Since Brazil won the bid for the 2016 Olympics it has unveiled a host of projects to improve Rio de Janeiro, the geographically spectacular but socially challenged city. A portion of these policies aim to improve social conditions and reform the favelas.

The government's goal has been to oust the drug traffickers, occupy the favelas, reduce crime, and peacefully remain in control of the favelas. The ultimate goal is to fully integrate the marginalized favelas into Brazilian urban life. However, critics worry that the Brazilian government will not be concerned with the projects after the 2016 Games.

One of the more recent public security policies to oust the drug dealers is the implementation of the Pacifying Police Units (UPPs), which began in 2008. The pacification process consists of four phases. The first phase is data and intelligence collection before the operation. The second phase, and the most controversial, is the BOPE (Special Police Operations Battalion) invasion and land occupation. The third phase is the UPP installation, and the final is the progress evaluation.²²

The initial favela invasion is conducted by BOPE, Brazil's elite military security force. BOPE enters the favelas in armored vehicles, which are nicknamed the "big skulls" because of a painted skull pierced with a knife and two pistols, their giant symbol, stamped on the military vehicles. The elite squads are frequently criticized for their confrontational language, military-style police operations, and disruption to social order. The invasions have created something of a territorial war between the commandos and military police, with both groups fighting for control of the land.²³

²² McLoughlin, "Will Crime Crackdown Transform Rio's Shantytowns?"

²³ *They Came in Shooting*, 4.

The intensity of BOPE can be seen through a complaint letter that was published in Rio's daily newspaper. The letter was written regarding the violent lyrics that comprise several of BOPE's training songs.

The interrogation is very easy to do / get the slum dweller and beat him till it hurts /
Interrogations are very easy to finish / get the criminal and beat him till he dies.

[O interrogatório é muito fácil de fazer / pega o favelado e dá porrada até doer / O interrogatório é muito fácil de acabar / pega o bandido e dá porrada até matar.]

A criminal from a slum / you don't sweep up with a broom / you sweep them up with
grenades / with a rifle and with a machine gun.

*[Bandido favelado / não varre com vassoura / se varre com granada / com fuzil, metralhadora.]*²⁴

Human rights organizations have publicly condemned BOPE's practices and techniques as overly aggressive. As recently as 2009 the Human Rights Watch released a report regarding abuses like unlawful killings and excessive use of force by local law enforcers in crime-infected cities like Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo. Amnesty International has also accused law enforcement officers of committing human rights violations and repressive actions. The state and federal authorities were not exempt from the criticism, and were described in Amnesty International's report as being supportive of the practices.²⁵

Following the BOPE invasions, the stabilization and occupation phase of the favelas takes place. The UPPs, squadrons of Brazilian officers occupying favelas using community-policing methods, are installed and begin to take control. Their main job is to maintain a security presence for the communities and reinstall peace where drug dealers were previously in charge. Rio State Security Secretary José



BOPE patrol in 2000. Photo by Multplaneta (Own work) [CC-BY-SA-3.0 (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/>)], via Wikimedia Commons

24 Ibid., 9.

25 Ibid., 5.

Mariano Beltrame explained, “The reason the UPPs exist is to create a fertile ground where dignity can take root. The success of the project depends on massive investment, and that isn’t happening as fast as it should.”²⁶

So far, there have been 17 UPPs set up in 68 favelas, and crimes (such as murder and assault) in those communities are said to be down significantly. While there are not yet many hard statistics on crime rates post-UPP installation, residents seem to be satisfied. There is a



President Barack Obama waves to people gathered on the street outside the Cidade de Deus (City of God) favela Community Center in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Official White House Photo by Pete Souza. (<http://www.flickr.com/photos/whitehouse/5610999740>) [Public domain], via Wikimedia Commons

newfound confidence in the Brazilian security forces, which are no longer in constant battle with the drug gangs of the pacified favelas. The first UPP that was set up in Santa Marta received a 98% approval rating from the residents. The pacification process has attracted international attention, including visitors like U.S. President Barack Obama and US Speaker of the House John Boehner, who traveled separately to Brazil to visit the favelas undergoing reform.²⁷

By the time the World Cup is held in 2014, Brazil’s goal is to have 40 UPPs in place. By the 2016 Olympics, 100 are to be in place. In order for these goals to be effective the UPPs and other policies for favela restructuring must be long term. Currently, there is a law being discussed in Brazil’s Congress to ensure that the UPPs stay for a minimum of 25 years. This would guarantee that the favelas will not be forgotten once the mega-events have taken place.²⁸

The UPP model is seen as one that could be used throughout the world, especially in places that are fighting drug violence. However, the favela reforms will require more than just community policing. They will need the support of international organizations and local

26 Downie, “Rio Gives Its Favelas a Pre-Olympics Makeover.”

27 McLoughlin, “Will Crime Crackdown Transform Rio’s Shantytowns?”

28 Ibid.

nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). Ultimately, they will need the support and cooperation of the favela dwellers themselves.

The UPPs are a start, the starting point for social projects. Never before was there a project as consistent as this. But this is the start, not the end. Much will be required on this path, the right path to obtain an entirely integrated city. It still requires a social dimension. Security by itself is not a solution. Right now we need an invasion by citizenship, and this integration will become a reality.²⁹

Tensions on the Rise

In October 2009 a police helicopter was shot down just one mile away from the Maracana Stadium in Rio, where the opening and closing ceremonies for the 2016 Olympics are to take place. The helicopter was attempting to descend upon the Morro dos Macacos favela when criminal gangs began to fire. Two officers were killed during a forced emergency landing. The attack against the police helicopter is only a small glimpse into Brazil's quasi-Civil War that is currently taking place. While many are celebrating the security reforms, these reforms are also resulting in new tensions. These tensions further increase security and stabilization concerns for Brazil.³⁰

After the Pan-American Games in 2007 Brazilians began to realize that many of the promises made to justify the high-cost of the Games would not be kept. The public budget and tax dollars used for the 2007 Games were justified to Brazilians by the potential long-term benefits. However, the two new subway lines that were promised were never built. The public was promised access to use the stadiums after the events; however, they proved not to be useful, since sports are largely considered a "luxury good." As shown through the Pan-American Games example, mega-events and new investments are often used only for city marketing, not for actually solving daily social problems of urban life. If previous investments in the events did benefit Brazilian society, they tended to go toward already socially privileged areas and avoided the areas that needed help the most.

29 Zuenir Ventura "An Invasion by Citizenship to Integrate the Divided City | Cidade Olímpica."

30 Boyle, "Brazilian Drug Gangs Shoot down Police Chopper Near Rio De Janeiro; 2 Officers Dead."

The state's interference with private ownership of property is also increasing hostility among the public. Homes surrounding the stadium are being expropriated for stadium development. For those properties that are not taken over, prices are expected to rise, making them unaffordable for most private citizens. Residents, especially in the Rio favelas where the new highway is being built, will be forced to relocate. Whole communities are being leveled to make room for the new (and necessary) highway. Authorities anticipate that 3,000 houses will be demolished, but urban specialists speculate the real number will be much higher. Jorge Luis Borges Ferreira, an urban planner, feels that the eviction process reflects deeper social issues: "There is a clear process of gentrification under way, where the poor are being pushed further out of the city to make way for the growing middle class who can pay top prices for new luxury developments built where the slums used to be."³¹

Ethnic and social tensions are another force to be reckoned with in Brazil. A stigma has been accompanying the favela since its emergence in the 19th century, that "the *favelados* [*favela dweller*] are black, are lazy, and are ignorant..."³² In 2001 the most common reasoning for discrimination in Brazil was not racism, but rather "favela-ism." 84% of the people interviewed during a sociology study indicated that they associated a stigma with



Favelado boys playing soccer in Jaqueline Favela, São Paulo, Brazil.
Photo by cassimano [CC-BY-NC-SA 2.0], via <http://www.flickr.com/photos/cassimano/2450801882/sizes/o/in/photostream/>

those people living in a favela. This response included Brazilians of all ages, from children to the elderly. Two years later the same study was conducted, but this time 92% of those surveyed gave prejudicial answers against those living in favelas.³³

31 Lustig, "Rio Olympics."

32 Turcheti e Melo, "Public Policy for the Favelas in Rio De Janeiro: The Problem (in) Framing," 26.

33 Perlman, *Favela: Four Decades of Living on the Edge in Rio De Janeiro*, 150–156.

Fencing Them In

In Brazil the rich and poor can literally live side by side because the favelas are inter-mixed geographically with prosperous neighborhoods, but they still remain alienated from one another. Now that separation is more distinct than ever because of a government program announced in 2009. The program, which had a total cost of around \$24 million, was to construct vertical, concrete walls around 19 favelas in Rio de Janeiro. The state's explanation for the program was that the walls would keep the favelas from expanding horizontally, but opponents of the project are not so sure. Many feel that the walls were constructed to contain the illegal and illegitimate and to hide the poverty existing there to ensure that city-goers are not constantly reminded of it. One professor referred to the physical walls as "a fascist fence around poor."³⁴

These few examples show why more and more activists are increasingly accusing Brazil of criminalizing the poor. This is an observable phenomenon that sees the poorest members of Brazilian society, as identified by the state and quasi-state actors (military and police), as criminals:

Violence is an inherent element of poverty in Brazil: it disproportionately affects the poorest communities, in urban and rural areas alike, and in turn reinforces this poverty. Furthermore, state actors engaged in law enforcement tend to 'profile' the poor, and particularly the poor residents of Brazil's *favelas*, as 'criminals'...*The criminalization of the poor justifies public security strategies that violate a range of human rights, including the right to life, as police engage in arbitrary actions against favela residents, particularly young, black males.*³⁵

The transformations of Rio's infrastructure for the 2016 Olympics are expected to cost \$14 billion. However, 80% of these funds are dedicated to Rio's already affluent neighborhoods.³⁶ The promises not kept and mistreatment of the lower classes have the potential to create a Brazilian public that does not support the mega-events or the policies put in place to prepare for them.

34 Turcheti e Melo, "Public Policy for the Favelas in Rio De Janeiro: The Problem (in) Framing," 29–31.

35 "Brazil: A Follow-up Report to the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights on the Economic, Social and Cultural Root Causes of Torture and Other Forms of Violence in Brazil / October 1, 2010 / Reports and Publications / ESCR / OMCT," 6.

36 Rodgers, *Latin American Urban Development into the 21st Century*.

“Where have we gone wrong if it is necessary to hoist the Brazilian flag in Brazilian territory, as if this signified the conquest of foreign land?”

Although the UPPs are reforming the favelas from within, the two separate worlds within Brazil still remain. In November 2011 special police force and navy commandos invaded Rocinha and Vidigal, two of Rio’s largest favelas at the crack of dawn, after which they hoisted the Brazilian flag to show that government authority had been restored in the favelas. One journalist posed the question, “Where have we gone wrong if it is necessary to hoist the Brazilian flag in Brazilian territory, as if this signified the conquest of foreign land?”³⁷ Military occupiers of favelas are treating them as if they are foreign territory.

Favelas in the Media

As a result of hosting a mega-event, Brazil will automatically be the center of international media attention. Through positive media coverage Brazil has the potential to dramatically increase tourism revenues during the events and much further into the future. Negative coverage, such as the media’s categorization of favelas as “poverty-stricken ghettos,” can also be used to Brazil’s benefit to attract foreign investment and support for urbanization programs. However, Brazil’s current reporting does not necessarily reflect reality and does not work to the benefit of favela residents. Despite their biased coverage of favelas, the media can serve to increase international awareness of Brazilian realities.

Media reports and films often support the stereotype that favela dwellers are all criminals. Popular, violent movies like *City of God* showed the world the inherent violence of favelas. Newspaper article titles like “Drugs, Guns, Gangs and Violence” and “Rio Favela Violence: Police Take Control of Gang Stronghold” depict an overwhelming negative picture. Negative media depictions of the favelas are not necessarily false, but are biased in their unbalanced approach toward the topic. Violence and crime are indeed taking place, but there is another side

³⁷ Buarque, “The Obvious Act of Refusing a Bribe Has Become Heroism in Brazil. And This Is a Shame.”

to the story which is not being told. Media outlets, specifically news articles, have an ethical obligation to report all sides of the story, including that of success within the favelas.

War-like language is typical of favela reporting. For example, a hurt man in the favela is referred to as “a wounded bandit,” and the people arrested are referred to by their favela nicknames instead of formal names. This language paints a more gang-like picture of all of the favela residents, the majority of whom are not directly involved in the drug trafficking. For example, statistics of the Alemão Complex show that only .05% of the 200,000 inhabitants are actually involved in the trafficking.

An overall lack of reporting is another characteristic of favela reporting. As South America’s largest media market and as one that embraces a constitutional guarantee of “free press,” Brazil’s media are the envy of much of South America.³⁸ Despite the Brazilian media’s prominence throughout Latin America, media outlets have been criticized for turning a blind eye to the favelas’ inadequacies too often. In preparations for the sporting events, Brazil is investing in infrastructure that could easily end up being useless in the long run. The enormous government spending used for the 2007 Pan-American Games resulted in many “white elephant investments” for Brazil, which were never needed or used again. For example, enormous soccer stadiums were built in places that culturally did not embrace the sport, and therefore were not utilized after the Games. A Brazilian professor posed the question of why this investment trend is continuously being ignored by the Brazilian media, and why nobody seems to ask any questions. An experienced Brazilian journalist explained the situation further:

Brazil’s sport press does not have a tradition of dedicating itself vigorously to the irregularities that occurred in sports entities. There is not in sport a systemic coverage on the discovery of possible irregularities. A lot of Brazilians still believe that the Olympics and World Cup will generate a lot of business. Journalists have an obligation to cover what other sort of business there is, too.³⁹

38 “Brazil Country Profile: Media.”

39 Menary, “Brazil Is Set to Repeat Mistakes from Previous Mega-events in 2012 and 2014.”



Armored vehicle on Rocinha's main road during the peaceful invasion of Rocinha. Photo by Zoë Roller, via <http://rioradar.com/archives/936>

The lack of community voices within reporting supports the critique that the favela pacifications are just part of Brazil's agenda to improve its image. Favelas were initially selected for pacification based on their size and on their relation to future international sporting events, which further supports this claim. However, it is not clear whether or not this detracts from the importance of the pacification

process. This is arguably the case with the reporting of the peaceful invasion of Rocinha, Brazil's largest favela. The invasion, which was part of Brazil's ongoing pacification program, took place just before dawn on November 13, 2011. The newspaper's headlines the day after the invasion read, "Rocinha is Ours."⁴⁰ The operation was considered by some to be only a "media circus." However, it cannot be denied that the 100,000 people of Rocinha had been living under the control of drug gangs and corrupt police for three decades. No shots were fired, no blood was drawn. Nonetheless, media often tell the stories of the invasions as if they are reporting a "show-biz" event.

The 21st century has given rise to films that have brought the favelas further into public consciousness. Films such as *City of God* (2002) and its sequel, *City of Men* (2005), *Favela Rising* (2006), and *Tropa de Elite* (2007) have reached large audiences throughout the world. These films have created a "buzz" and a newfound international interest in the favelas. These films, whose running times are restricted to around two hours, can generally only focus on a particular segment of the story (e.g., criminals and drug violence).

Fernando Meirelles, the director of the film *City of God*, modeled the film after a book written by Paulo Lins about gang life in a Rio slum. The story line was accurately described as "a huge, nightmarish family in which the children live and die by their own simple rules in the

40 Frayssinet, "Brazilian Favela Becomes a Living Museum."

absence of parents, religion, or any other higher authority.” Meirelles knew that the film could have an enormous societal impact, and stated, “Some works of art have the power to change our lives and Paulo Lins’ book is one of them.” The film, which was subtitled and sold around the world, was deemed “a needful call for change” by Luis Inácio “Lula” da Silva, Brazil’s previous president.⁴¹ The film quickly became the fifth most successful box-office hit in Brazilian cinema history. However, it also received domestic and international criticism for promoting social denunciations. The film was criticized for its superficial portrayal of all criminals as Afro-Brazilians and for exploiting children’s images. MV Bill, an Afro-Brazilian rapper and resident of the City of God favela, responded in an open letter to the media, “They stereotyped our people and did not give us anything in return. If someday, someone transforms your life into a huge circus, demand your right to answer.”⁴²

Another popular film, *Tropa de Elite* (or Elite Squad), focuses on the controversial BOPE security forces. The film was viewed by over twelve million Brazilians alone, and was a worldwide hit. It depicted the endemic violence of favelas and the corruption of Brazilian institutions. It also portrayed cops, who were often homicidal, as heroes. The film, like *City of God*, raised awareness and caused much discussion of security in terms of the upcoming sporting events. Within weeks of the film’s release, the national debate regarding the favelas exploded. In response, dozens more news articles were written.⁴³ Critics accused the film of promoting a dangerous ideology, “that Rio’s notoriously violent special forces police were ‘superheroes, out to combat the scum of humanity and the corrupt bourgeois’.”⁴⁴

News stories and films can be described as not just social reports, but also as cultural texts that establish and form the public’s understanding of social norms. It is apparent how these monolithic portrayals of favelas could increase the public’s fear of violence. A recently discussed phenomenon has argued that an increased public fear of violence ultimately supports increased police violence and the use of excessive force. This phenomenon can be referred to as a “spiral

41 Vieira, “City of God in Several Voices.”

42 Oliveira, “An Ethic of the Esthetic.”

43 Ituassu, “Tropa De Elite: Brazil’s Dark Sensation | openDemocracy.”

44 Phillips, “Number One with a Bullet.”

of violence.” It developed in the 1990s from media reports focused on security of certain sectors/spaces of society. As Brazilian society becomes more and more disapproving of the perceived favela violence, Brazilian security forces will respond with more prejudice toward the favela dwellers. The security forces will also act with more assurance that their actions are justified.

In contrast with the previous media examples which increase fear and promote stereotyping, a more realistic story can be told with the help of favela residents, who are increasingly becoming active participants in the media. While this civilian participation is still underdeveloped, there are new outlets for favela residents to voice their stories and opinions. For example, NGOs and academics have created programs in several favelas that teach adolescents about journalism for social change. *O Cidadão* is a newspaper that was started by a local NGO and circulates around the 16 favelas of Maré, which is considered one of the most dangerous regions in Rio de Janeiro. Young local journalists are taught journalism techniques and use *O Cidadão* as a platform to tell their stories and educate the local population. The opportunities to participate in media productions give young residents more social responsibilities and engage them in politically-relevant actions. The program gives the journalists a sense of pride and a new hope for future opportunities.⁴⁵

Residents of favelas who are facing eviction are also using social media to get their message heard. In contrast to those Chinese who were easily removed in Beijing during preparations for the 2008 Olympics, many Brazilians are standing their ground. Favela residents are using handheld video cameras, blogs, and sometimes a helping hand from Brazil’s mainstream news media.⁴⁶

Since the UPPs started occupying favelas, various news reports have taken a more positive look at the favelas and emphasized change. These show favelas as places where honest people are now able to make a living even under rough circumstances. Hardly ever, though, do major media outlets use the voice of favela residents to explain the real story.⁴⁷

45 Custodio, “Media as Platforms for Youth Civic Engagement in Rio De Janeiro’s Favelas.”

46 Romero, “Slum Dwellers Are Defying Brazil’s Grand Design for Olympics.”

47 Arsenault, “Counter-insurgency ‘Improves’ Brazil’s Slums.”

“Mega-cities are not going away, nor are the negative externalities of them. As the narrative of the Brazilian favelas shows, slums and shanty-towns present more than just urbanization issues to be dealt with”

Implications for the Future

According to Saunders, “If a mega-city is avoided or isolated, the city will generate a defensive politics of its own. In Brazil, it took the form of the drug gang. In Mumbai, it is Hindu nationalism. In the arrival cities of Europe, Islamic extremism...If it is given the resources to do so, it will flourish, without them, it is likely to explode.”⁴⁸

Mega-cities are not going away, nor are the negative externalities of them. As the narrative of the Brazilian favelas shows, slums and shanty-towns present more than just urbanization issues to be dealt with. They are the home to one-sixth of the world’s population, which is a not just made up of poor, criminal residents to be removed. They are communities comprised of a country’s citizens. The Brazilian favelas teach many lessons that can be used throughout the world, specifically where drug trafficking or violence is a problem.

With the UPP implementations, the Brazilian government has adopted a more long-term and effective policy for addressing the economic inequalities in Brazil. Merely removing the favelas to make room for stadiums will do little to solve the problem of poverty. Replacing the drug traffickers and illegal arms with community policing units is a major first step toward favela reform. The UPPs certainly do not represent the end of reform, but it is agreed that they are a good start. The long-term nature and collaborative effort of the UPPs are significant factors of why they have been so successful. Throughout the pacification process the state needs to pay special attention to any human rights accusations or violations in order to reassure the favela occupants that the reform is for their benefit.

48 Saunders, *Arrival City: How the Largest Migration in History Is Reshaping Our World*, 75.

Brazilian security officials are thinking long term, even past the upcoming mega-events. The UPPs are preparing to stay for as long as necessary, possibly 25 years. The four phases that comprise the pacification process use collaborative efforts among different law enforcement agencies. Intelligence gathering, military police, and civilian policing are using their strengths in different ways. Arguably, however, BOPE is using too much strength. While BOPE's mission is to find and remove drug traffickers and arms, all else should not be forgotten in the process.

There are around five hundred new police officers entering the force each month in Brazil. The new officers are now being trained under a new mentality, one which aims at de-emphasizing the importance of killing, where police officers do not feel naked without a rifle. One thing is clear: in order to be effective, officials will need to maintain a constant community presence that is focused on prevention and that respects human rights. The use of highly visible, forceful and "military style" executions is becoming less and less popular.⁴⁹

The media and public figures' reports regarding the favelas may be partially to blame for security forces' excessive use of violence, since reports have a habit of dehumanizing those residing in favelas. Regardless of the public's perception of what favela residents "deserve," human rights should always be a central issue in law enforcement and military training.

The state should avoid policies which marginalize instead of integrate the favelas, like the physical walls which were built around them. Once favela residents are integrated into the formal economy, they will have many more viable options outside of the criminal lifestyle. As they increasingly embrace these opportunities, society's perception of them as "criminalized poor" will hopefully transform into one of respect.

Because of two-mega events, the World Cup and the Olympic and Paralympic Games, Brazil received extra incentives to jump-start social programs. Most cities will not be so fortunate as to be awarded events of this stature within a two-year span. Events such as these should not serve as the sole catalyst for social and urban reform in Brazil or any other country.

⁴⁹ Michaels, "Rio's Top Cop Talks Public Safety Policy, Favela Pacification Program."

The need to improve urbanization policies and to achieve the integration of marginalized communities is a human rights issue that goes beyond mega-events.

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