Favelas in Pre-Olympic Rio de Janeiro: Renewal or Removal?

The elusive social legacy of Rio 2016

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Promises, promises

Beyond fostering sports, building infrastructure for the games, and programs to take on environmental concerns, Rio de Janeiro’s Olympic Games were to leave a lasting social legacy:

- Transportation
- Security (UPP)
- Social inclusion
- urban upgrades
Morar Carioca

One of the principal manifestations of this was a favela urbanization program called Morar Carioca.

It’s goal: to urbanize all of Rio’s favelas by 2020.
Favelas in Rio, 2008. 25% of population
Mayor Eduardo Paes, TED Talk 2012:

“The city of the future has to be socially integrated.”

“Favelas can be the solution, not the problem.”
O Bota-Abaixo: Favela Removal 1960s-1970s
Political capital gained, program eliminated.

• Of the 40 architectural firms contracted, only a handful had their contracts honored.

• Project largely abandoned, yet the few, pre-existing cases of interventions still figure heavily in Olympic propaganda
Showcase examples
January 7, 2010

• “The city government will remove 119 favelas before 2012.” – Paes, in O Globo
From center to periphery
Reaction to city’s removal plan
Forced Removals

Threats and Intimidation
Conclusions

• By 2015, more than 19,000 families had lost their home.
• Morar Carioca was abandoned once it was wrung of political capital.
• Olympics served as a tool for capital accumulation, land seizure and real estate speculation.