



# UNRISD

United Nations Research Institute for Social Development

## **The Olympic Legacy of Rio 2016**

*A City for Whom?*

*Adriana Portella  
Federal University of Pelotas  
Brazil*

*Gisele Pereira  
Federal University of Pelotas  
Brazil*

Draft paper prepared for the UNRISD Conference

**Overcoming Inequalities in a Fractured World:  
Between Elite Power and Social Mobilization**

8–9 November 2018, Geneva, Switzerland

The United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD) is an autonomous research institute within the UN system that undertakes multidisciplinary research and policy analysis on the social dimensions of contemporary development issues. Through our work we aim to ensure that social equity, inclusion and justice are central to development thinking, policy and practice.

UNRISD ▪ Palais des Nations ▪ 1211 Geneva 10 ▪ Switzerland  
info.unrisd@un.org ▪ [www.unrisd.org](http://www.unrisd.org)

Copyright © United Nations Research Institute for Social Development

This is not a formal UNRISD publication. The responsibility for opinions expressed in signed studies rests solely with their author(s), and availability on the UNRISD website ([www.unrisd.org](http://www.unrisd.org)) does not constitute an endorsement by UNRISD of the opinions expressed in them. No publication or distribution of these papers is permitted without the prior authorization of the author(s), except for personal use.

## Abstract

This investigation analysed the urban and social legacy of the 2016 Olympic Games in Brazil. The objective is to provide a critical analysis through the narratives of residents and stakeholders about the way the removals were happening in the city together with the urban planning strategies, and whether those actions benefitted the population across social classes. This study discusses the concepts of mega-event, gentrification, and housing rights. Qualitative methods were applied to analyse the perception of residents regarding the improvements that the Olympics brought to the quality of life introduced into their neighbourhoods. Technical visits, behavioural observations and face-to-face interviews with the people who live in areas of intervention and gentrification and with the stakeholders involved in the urban projects were conducted. The results found indicate a questionable scenario of what Rio's sustainable candidature for the Olympic Games should be; also, they demonstrate a lack of commitment of stakeholders towards the social inclusion of local residents in the intervention areas. It is hoped that this work will yield new approaches and debates about what happened in the city's urban fabric due to the 2016 Olympics, in order to learn lessons for future host cities for mega-sport events.

## Keywords

Gentrification; resilience; removal; social exclusion

## Bio

Adriana Portella is a current Associate Professor at Federal University of Pelotas in Brazil, Head of the Department of Architecture and Planning. Her main research interests are in urban design, social and gender inequalities, and ageing populations. Her major recent publications are the books 'Insights on favelas' published in 2018 in Brazil, and 'Visual Pollution: Advertising, Signage and Environmental Quality' published in 2014 in London.

Gisele Pereira is a current Adjunct Professor at Federal University of Pelotas in Brazil. Her main research interests are in tourism, management and sustainable environment. Her major recent publication is the book 'Insights on favelas' published in 2018 in Brazil.

## Introduction

This study analyses the urban and social legacy of the 2016 Olympic Games in Brazil. The investigation aims to examine the people's removal processes and to critically discuss concepts of mega-events, gentrification, and housing rights. Factors such as social inclusion and participation of the population directly affected by the urban interventions carried out in the city of Rio de Janeiro are addressed – both from the point of view of those involved in the design and execution of the projects, and from those who were removed. It is an exploratory study that uses qualitative methods to launch a debate on controversial topics such as gentrification, which ultimately affect the quality of life of the most vulnerable people group. Technical visits, behavioural observations, and interviews were conducted with the local population and with the people involved in the projects. The data obtained allowed for the identification of variables that are not part of the official discourse, which was the basis of the projects of the Rio de Janeiro Olympic Park for the 2016 games. The importance of the mega-sport event in a world context is presented, as well as the debate on the problems found in the works of the 2007 Pan-American Games, as a way to build a contextual basis for interpreting and analysing the data found in relation to the works done in Barra da Tijuca for the 2016 Olympic Park. This discussion helps in the debate on issues of social inclusion, population participation, and gentrification.<sup>1</sup>

## What is an international sporting mega-event?

International sport mega-events include the Olympics Games, which are held under the administration of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and the World Cup under the administration of the International Federation of Associated Football (FIFA). These events stimulate tourism, have economic and social impacts, and can be planned to renew and publicize the image of the host country. A mega-event, when well planned, is an opportunity for the economic development of the host city and the country. It can aid the development of new urban areas by planning a sustainable legacy, which brings direct benefits to the quality of life of the population. This occurs when the infrastructure developed for the mega event is designed to be reused by the local population after the event, since the games last only a few days (Paiva 2013).

However, hosting a mega-event was not always synonymous with development. According to Muñoz (1997), it was only after 1932 that a link between mega-events and urban development was established, with the Olympic Games in Los Angeles serving as a pioneer initiative in the development of public projects that helped, to some extent, to rebuild the country's economy. The Barcelona Olympics in 1992 are also highlighted regarding the urban interventions that were carried out in preparation for the games. The resources used to carry out projects in this city sought to renew the port area of the city which had previously been degraded (Rolnik 2010). In London, in 2012, the mega-event of the Olympic Games promoted the development of the Stratford region, located in the eastern part of the city, an area where urban renewal was intended to be an important project legacy for the local population. According to Rolnik (2011),

---

<sup>1</sup> This work was only made possible thanks to funding provided by the Brazilian Federal Government (CNPQ - The Brazilian National Council for Scientific and Technological Development).

London invested strongly in social housing, with 30 percent of real estate development linked to the Olympics mandated to be housing.

At the same time, depending on the planning approach of each country to prepare the host city for the games, the effects of the mega-event on the local population can be very negative, as has been the case with the Olympics in Athens, Greece. In 2004, the mega-event succeeded in almost three weeks of games, but 14 years later, 21 out of 22 works constructed for the event are not in use. The 2010 World Cup in South Africa also proved to be negative as it was an event that was not intended for the majority of people in the country. 72,000 people living in areas near the stadiums were resettled in peripheral areas of Cape Town, with many families being relocated to the so-called 'Tin Can Towns', a camp built with aluminium cans, with poor comfort, sanitation, and security (Figure 1).



Figure 1: 'Tin Can Towns' in South Africa  
*Source: Bill Corcoran/IRIN 2012*

Within this context, two important concepts that are often in conflict when sporting mega-events are being planned, are housing rights and gentrification. According to Rolnik (2011), for housing rights to be observed in practice, housing must be located in an area that has access to light, water, sewage, garbage collection, and access to human and economic development opportunities, such as education and health. In addition, the housing area should provide job opportunities, income and adequate quality of life for people. When a portion of the population does not have access to adequate housing in contexts of high inequalities, it is up to the public authority to guarantee this right.

The concept of gentrification was defined in 1964 by Ruth Glass as the urban process that provides, for the upgrading of devalued areas of the city by the real estate market, transformations of property ownership (from rented to owned), leading to an increase in the value of properties and the substitution of vulnerable social classes for a more affluent population. This process has become common in host countries of mega-events; however, local authorities should define public policies so that gentrification does not cause damage to the more socially disadvantaged local population. The participation of the local population is fundamental for the discussion of new design strategies in areas of urban renewal, in order to guarantee a socially mixed residential composition and to protect the identity and culture of

each place (Monteiro and Limeira 2012). The cartoon shown in Figure 2 exemplifies the issue of gentrification well.



Figure 2: Gentrification consequences  
*Source: adapted from Sarau para Todos 2017*

In view of the arguments presented, the 2007 Pan-American Games, which took place in the city of Rio de Janeiro, will be analysed in order to establish a critical analysis on what happened in the context of the Olympic Games in 2016.

## The Pan American Games (2007) in Rio de Janeiro

The Pan American Games of 2007 were hosted by the city of Rio de Janeiro. The candidature of Rio as the city to host the Pan states that this would be the moment to show the international community that Brazil had the capacity to host a mega-event such as the Olympics in 2016, which would be seen as the successor of Pan American Games in Rio.

‘Vila do Pan’ was built in the region of ‘Barra da Tijuca’ in Rio, on the banks of the Jacarepagua Lagoon, with the purpose of housing the athletes during the event. The facilities for the Pan American games were built to meet the Olympic criteria, which were more specific and expensive than the criteria established for the Pan American Games. Local Rio authorities defended this decision because they believed the structures would serve as a legacy to strengthen the city’s candidature for the 2016 Olympics. However, from 2007 to 2016, the Olympic criteria for gaming facilities underwent alterations, and such constructions no longer met the Olympic requirements when Rio was named as the venue for the 2016 Olympics.

After the event, ‘Vila do Pan’ was transformed into a gated community for more affluent social classes. The urban and architectural project was executed in haste and without a proper evaluation of the physical soil conditions in the area, which led to problems of infrastructure in the buildings and in the streets, causing the actual residents want to place their property for sale (Figure 3).



Figure 3: ‘Vila do Pan’ already converted into a residential high-income gated community in 2015 with infrastructure problems

*Source: Portella 2015*

With regard to the post-match stadiums, the ‘Olympic Arena’, ‘Riocentro’ and ‘Engenhão’, for example, were transferred to the private sector and were not available to the local population. The multipurpose arena is used only for shows, and the Velodrome and ‘Maria Lenk’ Water Park were left without regular activities. For the 2016 Olympics, the use of the Velodrome was disregarded because the construction did not conform to the norms of the Olympic Games facilities, and was thus demolished. Only ‘Maria Lenk’ Water Park, after undergoing renovations, was reused for the Olympics Games of 2016.

The removal of people in Rio de Janeiro began in 2006 when the local authorities removed a total of 24,677 people from their homes, stating that it was necessary for the execution of urban projects to take place and in order to prepare the city for the games. The city's lack of dialogue with the removed people, threats of violence towards residents, removals carried out at night, and a lack of participation by local communities in the proposed projects, among other attitudes, characterized the processes of the removals which were carried out in order to meet the needs of the event. Other sectors of the city were also affected by the event, such as health, safety and education, since the local government, which financed the expenses, used funds from these sectors for the construction of further urban infrastructure. At the same time, there was a lack of transparency of the project accounts, contributing to opportunities for money diversion (Pereira 2011; Marcellino 2013). The initial budget was approximately \$ 103 million US dollars for the preparation of the event; however, it ended up around \$ 1 billion US dollars at its completion. Within this scenario, the true legacy of the games for the local population of Rio became questionable (Carvalho 2013).

## The Rio 2016 Olympics: An Urban and Social Analysis

Considering the context exposed above, this study focuses on the following research problems related to the Olympics of 2016: (i) the lack of participation of the local population in the urban projects that were carried out to attend the Olympics (ii) the absence of a social project that supported urban projects in the city; and (iii) the legacy left by the urban and architectural works characterized by real estate speculation and the attention to the interests of high-income classes.

The objective of this study is to offer a critical analysis, informed by the narratives of residents and stakeholders, about the way that the removals happened in the city of Rio de Janeiro for the preparation for the Olympic Games together with the urban planning strategies, and whether

those actions indeed benefitted the population regardless of their social class. As a case study, it was decided to analyse the projects related to the Rio 2016 Olympic Park and its urban and social impacts, as well as the perception of residents in favelas about the Olympic mega-event and their urban renewal projects. The research questions that guided this investigation were: (i) What does the urban legacy left by the Olympiad of 2016 give for the low-income population of the city of Rio de Janeiro?; and (ii) how were urban interventions for the 2016 Olympics perceived by the community of 'Vila Autodromo', located next to the Olympic Park?

## Methodology

Qualitative methods were applied to analyse the perception of residents in the city of Rio de Janeiro regarding the improvements that the Olympics brought to their quality of life and to their neighbourhoods. The study was conducted with residents and community leaders from the 'Morro da Providência', 'Vila Autodromo' and 'Morro do Vidigal' and stakeholders involved in the urban projects of the 2016 Olympics. Technical visits, behavioural observations and face-to-face interviews with the residents who live in areas of intervention and gentrification and with stakeholders involved in the urban projects were conducted.

This investigation involved unstructured interviews with two professionals who participated in the project of the Olympic Park, one interview with the community leader of 'Vila do Autodromo', two interviews with two community leaders of 'Morro da Providência', and informal talks with residents in 'Morro do Vidigal' and 'Morro da Providência'. The data obtained allowed for the identification of variables that are not part of the official discourse of the Rio Olympic candidature.

On 27 August 2015, the research team visited the Olympic Park for a technical visit. A professional who was involved in the project allowed the research team to do a guided tour inside the Olympic Park, but unfortunately she was not able to personally attend the meeting, but sent a marketing representative instead. During the visit, an unstructured interview was conducted with this representative, who showed a limited knowledge about the Olympic Park and stated arguments that were believed to not extend to those involved in the project (see below for speaking quote). On the same day a technical visit was also carried out at 'Vila do Autodromo', in order to understand the impacts of the Olympic Park project in the lives of that local population, to conduct behavioural observations and to interview the community leader of that place.

On 28 August 2015, an unstructured interview was held with one of the architects responsible for the Olympic Park project at the Municipal Olympic Enterprise (EOM) building. The EOM was linked to the Mayor's office in Rio and its duration was established until December 2016. This sector coordinated the execution of municipal activities and projects related to 2016 Olympic and Paralympic Games. In addition, it served as the point of contact and integration between City Hall, the state and federal governments, and all involved in the process of preparing the city for the mega-event.

A technical guided-visit was also held on 29 August 2015 at a non-profit organization (NPO) named 'Yellow House' in 'Morro da Providência'. Two walking interviews were held with two community leaders that took the research team on a walking visit to the main points of 'Morro da Providência', where urban projects were developed with the argument of bringing tourists to

visit the place. The narratives and photographic images of the area were important in order to understand how people build their sense of ‘place’ and perceive the Olympics in the city.

## Insights on favelas

The experience of the research team in Rio de Janeiro generated discussions and reflections that resulted in the publication of the book ‘Insights on favelas’ (Portella and Pereira 2018). The team was based at the ‘Morro do Vidigal’, in a local hostel, with the objective of collecting narratives from residents regarding their life in Rio, life in favelas and of how they perceive the urban projects designed to prepare the city for the Olympic Games. In ‘Vidigal’, windows have no bars, many of them do not even have frames (only a space in the wall), and yet the hill is described as the safest place for their residents. Even as strangers in the community, the locals welcomed the research group without prejudice or pre-conceived stereotypes (Figure 4).



Figure 4: The View of ‘Morro do Vidigal’ from a local hostel  
*Source: Portella 2015*

In the scope of this study, we asked people in ‘Vidigal’ if they knew of the project of ‘Porto Maravilha’ (Wonder Port), a work aimed at preparing the city for the Olympics in the port area. The answers we got were: ‘*What port?*’ ‘*Where is it?*’ ‘*Wonder for whom?*’ That is, it was not part of the urban imagery of the residents, and offered nothing to contribute to the quality of life of the community. At ‘Porto Maravilha’, the ‘Amanhã Museum’, signed by the Spanish architect Santiago Calatrava, cost the city \$ 55 million US dollars. An audit carried out by order of the Rio City Hall concluded that for the construction of this museum, the municipality reallocated \$ 29 million US dollars originally destined for infrastructure works in the favela ‘Morro do Pinto’. ‘Porto Maravilha’ is a consortium urban operation (a kind of public-private partnership project), managed by the Urban Development Company of the Region of Rio de Janeiro Port (CDURP). This company contracts the Concessionaire Porto Novo S.A. for the execution of works and provision of municipal services. This concessionaire has the ‘Odebrecht Group’, ‘OAS Ltda’ and ‘Carioca Christiani-Nielsen Engenharia’ as the main shareholders; all of which were cited in Operation ‘Lava Jato’, the ongoing criminal investigation of corruption

in Brazilian government (Figure 5). ‘Amanhã Museum’ is located next to the oldest favela in Rio de Janeiro – Morro da Providência – which in 2018 is still totally neglected by local authorities, and where people’s living conditions are very precarious.



Figure 5: ‘Amanhã Museum’, signed by the Spanish architect Calatrava, cost R\$ 215 million for the city. It is placed next to the oldest favela in Rio – ‘Morro da Providência’  
*Source: Portella 2015*

During the walking interview with the two community leaders in ‘Morro da Providência’, the invasion of gentrification could be seen marked along the walls that managed to resist demolition. On these ruins, the faces of residents who were removed are portrayed. Reports of bloody actions on the steps of the hill, located directly alongside the iron ‘tourist trail’ marked by the City Council to guide tourists to areas classified as safe by the local authorities (Figure 6), show the dichotomy of green-yellow Brazil, divided into inequalities and social exclusion. Even so, at every turn and at every corner of the walking interview, a celebration of life was still easily found: children playing in the street, women hanging clothes out to dry, neighbours talking, and the street in its fullest life. During the walk, a boy asked one of the researchers: ‘*Do you speak Portuguese?*’ She answered affirmatively, ‘*I’m like you, I’m Brazilian*’. He laughs and feels part of the research group. Resilience is the main factor found in the community, helping the residents to overcome their difficulty, lack of urban infrastructure and housing problems and helping them to have a positive perception about life. This feeling is built by place attachment and neighbourhood networks.

*Place attachment is the symbolic relationship formed by people, giving culturally shared emotional/affective meanings to a particular space or piece of land that provides the basis for the individual's and group's understanding of and relation to the environment. Place attachment is more than an emotional and cognitive experience, and includes cultural beliefs and practices that link people to place. (Low 1992:165-185)*

For the development of urban projects, a participatory methodology is fundamental to investigate and identify the variables that comprise place attachment, in order to create spaces that are desirable to the local needs and not only for uses that are external to the community.



iron rails marked on the ground in Morro da Providência with the purpose of guiding the tourist.

Figure 6: Stairs in ‘Morro da Providência’ and iron rails marked on the ground with the purpose of guiding the tourist to the safest areas of the favela

Source: Portella 2015

After the seven days of the research technical visit in Rio, the team returned to the formal city, where everyone lives behind walls and bars. The colours were no longer so vivid, the sound of the sea became diluted with that of cars, and even the birds were not seen anymore because of the deliberate height of the buildings. Beautiful ‘Leblon’ (a high-income area in Rio, next to ‘Vidigal’) is now perceived as a place of social segregation. After a number of reflections on such a positive experience in the favela, the research team went on to do fieldwork in the Olympic Park and ‘Vila do Autodromo’, and the main results and discussions are presented in the following sections.

## The Olympic Park of 2016: the (De)Construction of Urbanism

In August 2011, Rio de Janeiro City Hall announced the winning project of the International Competition for the General Urban Plan of the 2016 Olympic Park in Rio, coordinated by the Municipal Olympic Company (EOM) in partnership with the Institute of Architects of Brazil (IAB). The Park was planned in the area of the old racetrack of the city, located in the ‘Barra da Tijuca’ neighbourhood.

The project, developed by British consultancy AECOM, responsible for the 2012 London Olympic Park project, defined how public spaces, squares, and parks would be occupied in the 2016 Olympic Park in Rio, as well as the provision of permanent and temporary facilities and future real estate development to be built in the area. The ‘Vila do Autodromo’, an area of social housing located next to the old racetrack where the Park would be built, was mostly preserved in the original design. It was proposed to remove only the dwellings that were on the banks of the Jacarepagua Lagoon, which was to be decontaminated as part of the plan. The environmental argument was an important variable for the project to become the winner of the contest. The recovery and depollution of the lagoon and the landscaping of the Park area were decisive factors for the choice of the winning project. Unfortunately, during the execution of the project, all residents of ‘Vila do Autodromo’ were pressured to abandon their homes. In addition to this, environmental recovery actions were minimized. The legacy of the Park in the post-match period was parcelled land for housing development targeted at high-income groups, without considering social issues, satisfying the upper classes aspirations only (Figure 7).



Figure 7: (A) Original project for the 2016 Olympic Park showing the permanence of ‘Vila do Autodromo’, and (B) Proposal of the future housing developments that constitutes the legacy left for the neighbourhood

Source: IAB-RJ 2011

Three important issues about the implementation of the 2016 Olympic Park are discussed in the following sections: urban mobility, social inclusion (or exclusion), and environmental and sustainable integration. The discussions are supported by literature, by the technical and observational visits carried out by the research team and by the content analysis of the interview transcripts.

### Urban mobility, social and environmental inclusion analysis: The 2016 Olympic Park

One of the most striking questions about the urban insertion of the Olympic Park is that of urban mobility. The road project around the Park is characterized by an urban design aimed to cater to individual motor vehicles, to the detriment of pedestrians. The addition of lanes to the Avenues ‘Ambassador Abelardo Bueno’ and ‘Salvador Allende’ led to the creation of five lanes in each direction, increasing the capacity of traffic in the region. Although the project includes plans for the construction of a 9 km bike path, a BRT (Bus Rapid Transit) road, sidewalks and landscaping projects, the area remained totally dedicated to motorized private vehicles at the time of the research visit. The neighbourhood ‘Barra da Tijuca’ is characterized by the predominance of upper class gated communities, walled to the main road, generating streets without vitality and a life dependent on the automobile (Figure 8). The presence of pedestrians is rare in the region, generating a perception of ‘ghost neighbourhood’, due to the lack of pedestrians seen on the roads. Jane Jacobs (1961) pointed out that 57 years ago, empty streets increased people’s perceptions of insecurity, making the city lifeless and uninviting for leisure activities in public spaces. In 2018, ‘Barra da Tijuca’ region is characterized by a lack of squares and public parks, even along the banks of Jacarepagua Lagoon, an important point of the natural landscape of Rio de Janeiro. This perception is confirmed by one of the architects responsible for the Olympic Park Project, who states the following, during the interview conducted by the research team:

*This Park (Olympic Park) in reality will become a park just for private events because Barra da Tijuca region has an urban model in which people have everything they need inside the gated community where they live. Because of this, there is not much public space here as traditional cities have ... In Barra da Tijuca; we do not have common areas outside the gate communities. The Park will be a kind of area for private events,*

*because no one will leave his/her home here to go to a public park or square. If you see the location of it within the region, nobody will leave their buildings and cross a high-speed road to stay in a public park. (Interview with one professional responsible for the Olympic Park Project).*



Figure 8: Views of ‘Abelardo Bueno’ Avenue, in ‘Barra da Tijuca’, Rio de Janeiro. An urban design, which totally focuses on the use of private cars

*Source: Google Maps, Street View 2018*

During the Olympics, only pedestrians can circulate within a radius of 1.61 km from the Olympic Park, known as ‘1 mile’ by the organizers of the event. However, the urban design surrounding the Park prioritizes motor vehicles. In this way, it is questioned that, besides the project not being oriented towards the users' needs during the mega-event, the legacy is constituted of routes of rapid transit for vehicles. Considering that ‘Barra da Tijuca’ is an expanding neighbourhood that has undergone urban transformations since the 2007 Pan American Games, it is questionable why road projects would ignore issues such as sustainable mobility and universal design. In contrast, informal areas present in Rio de Janeiro, such as roadways of the favelas, meet much more of the urban design criteria for the pedestrian than the present Olympic Park road project (Figure 9).



Figure 9: We can see life in the streets in 'Morro da Providência', Rio de Janeiro. Informal settlements seem more effective than the formal streets of 'Barra da Tijuca' projected by the Olympics in 2016  
 Source: Portella 2015

On the subject of social inclusion, the choice of location for the construction of the Olympic Park, its principles and the relationship with the environment are factors that generate much discussion. The Park is located in the old racetrack of the city; and located next to it is the 'Vila do Autódromo', a Special Area of Social Interest (AEIS) since 2005, according to the city's Master Plan. In 1997, the State Government titled 104 lots and one year later, in 1998, the families living in the marginal strip of the Jacarepagua Lagoon received the legal use concession of their homes for 99 years. Therefore, the inhabitants of this area are not squatters (Figure 10).



Figure 10: Aerial view of the 'Vila do Autódromo' in Rio before the removal of its residents  
 Source: Google Maps, 2014



Figure 11: Aerial view of the ‘Vila do Autódromo’ in Rio after the removal of the majority of its residents Source: Google Maps, 2016

Interference in the area of ‘Vila do Autódromo’ could only happen if it guaranteed the permanence and right to housing of the low-income community since it is an AEIS. Addition of lanes to the ‘Salvador Allende’ and ‘Ambassador Abelardo Bueno’ Avenues, as well as the opening access to the Park, could not serve as motivation for the change in land use and occupation of that area. According to an interview conducted with the community leader of ‘Vila do Autódromo’, in November 2015 there were only about 100 families living in that area, before the beginning of the removals there were 583 families. The removals started in 2013 and were intensified in 2015 and 2016 leading up to the Olympic Games (Figures 11 and 12). The first removed families were convinced to exchange their homes for a 50 m<sup>2</sup> unit from ‘Minha Casa Minha Vida’ (a social Program of the Brazil Federal Government), located in another area of the city. The ones who did not agree to leave their homes to move to a small flat were withdrawn through legal measures and provided with a restitution payment of \$ 13,880.00 US dollars. Families that resisted until August 2015 and did not want to leave their homes were pushed by the city to leave their properties by means of restitution payment amounting of \$ 257,000.00 US dollars, according to the community leader. However, some families did not accept this higher compensation and still chose to remain in their homes, resisting the pressure of municipal power. For the 20 families who resisted in the area, the municipality demolished their homes and rebuilt 20 new houses in ‘Vila do Autódromo’, and allocated them there one week before the Games begin (Figure 13).

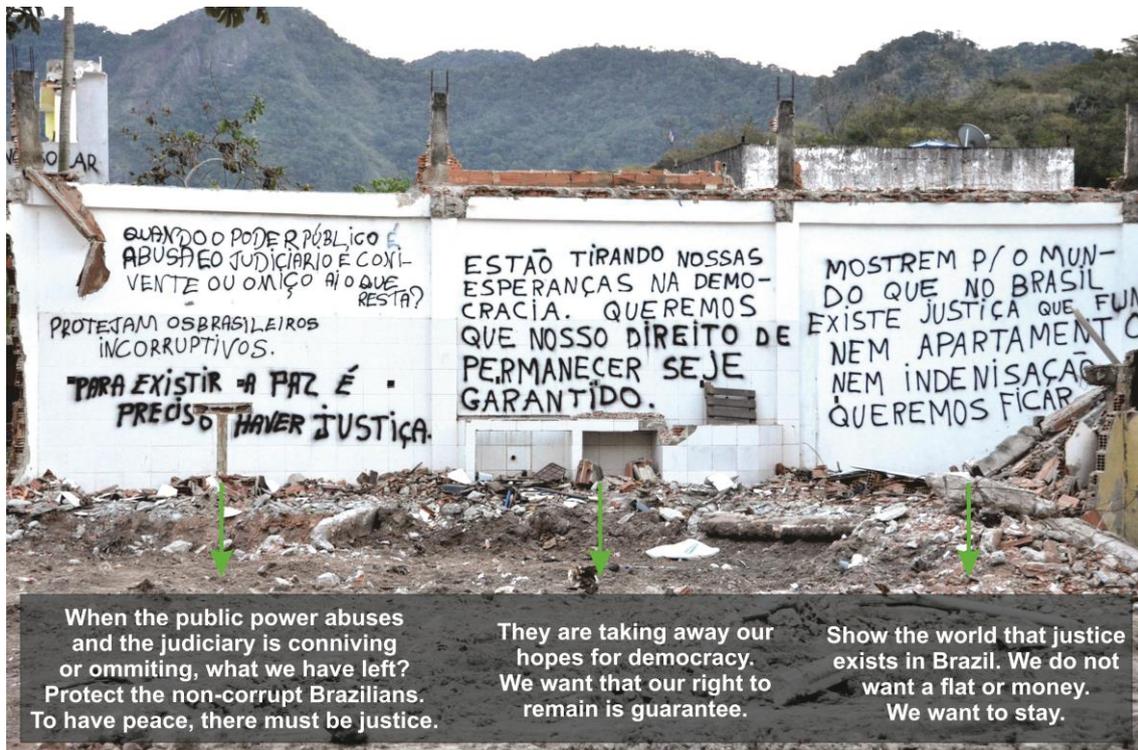


Figure 12: Wall left after demolition of a house by the local authority in ‘Vila do Autodromo’ in August 2015. On the walls, residents express their opinion in graffiti about the situation they were facing with the forced removals  
 Source: Portella 2015



Figure 13: In 30 July 2016 the new houses were delivered to 20 families in ‘Vila do Autodromo’  
 Source: Viva a Vila do Autodromo, Rio sem remoções 2016

According to the analysis of the interview with community leader of ‘Vila do Autodromo’, a climate of revolt was created among the first residents removed, who at the time received the units from ‘Minha Casa Minha Vida’ Program, and the local authority, which culminated in

offering high restitution to those who resisted the removals for longer. The situation that most disturbed the residents was the installation by the Olympic Park of a cement-making machine next to the wall that delimits the Park to the 'Vila'. Waste generated by this machine was polluting the environmental health of the community, and local residents interpreted the location of this machine as a way to pressure them to leave their homes. The following citation is from the interview with the community leader of 'Vila do Autodromo', that confirms this situation:

*They (the government) need the land to meet real estate speculation and we are in the way ... so they use various tricks, one of them is to say that the removals are necessary for public utility. They took advantage of the fact that there would be the mega-event so that judges feel free to give authorizations to do forced removals. There are 17 days of games, but their interest is not because of the games; we could continue to live here even with the games happening. The point is that there are three companies that will occupy 75 percent of this area when the games ended, which is Carvalho Rocha, Andrade Gutierrez and Odebrecht (...) these companies that are being investigated by Lava-Jato (a policy operation that investigates corruption in Brazil). After 17 days of games, they are going to dismantle the park and start building high residential buildings for the upper class. The removal here is for this reason, it may have happened in other countries differently, but here it is for this motive. They are taking advantage of the issue of the Olympics and treating the area of this community as a public utility area. I understand that this area could be modified to an attending society, but it needs to happen to suit the local population needs and not only the upper-class group. (Interview with the community leader of 'Vila do Autodromo')*

During the technical visit to the Olympic Park, the person involved in the project who accompanied the research team was asked if the area of 'Vila do Autodromo' would be part of the project of the Olympic Park, and what would be the reasons for the need to remove the residents from there. This is due to the fact that the initial proposal of the project did not foresee the removal of these people. The following answer was given:

*No, Vila do Autodromo area is not part of the project, I do not know what they are going to do there, but it is not with us, it is another sector that is responsible for the removal of those people ... if they are not all moved until the beginning of the games, we will put up some panels there, so that people who come to the games will not see them ... but it is more for the foreigner because whoever lives in Rio is used to living next to the favelas, (they) see the favela every day. (EOM person who accompanied the research team to the technical visit to the Olympic Park)*

Reading the facts mentioned by the interviewee, one can see the total neglect of social inclusion; the legacy left by the 2016 Olympic Games in 'Barra da Tijuca' is focused on the more affluent classes. In the capitalist system, that today defines the urban growth of many cities, no one invests in high indemnities in areas of removal, without the certainty of a much greater financial return. All areas of the Olympic Park and its immediate surroundings, after the end of the mega-event, are redesigned with buildings of a much higher value than the indemnities offered to the residents to leave their homes in 'Vila do Autodromo'. None of the interviewees who worked for the City Council in the Olympic Park Project knew how to report what would be done on the site of 'Vila do Autodromo', defined as an AEIS. According to the interview with one of the professionals responsible for the Park project, this area may be destined for an urban park, but

he contradicted himself when he also stated that in ‘Barra da Tijuca’ there is no need for areas with this characteristic, because as a zone of gated communities, residents have everything they need within their walls. In this way, the social function for which the area of the ‘Vila do Autodromo’ should be destined, becomes lost. In addition, with the analysis of the data obtained from the interview with the ECOM professional, it was confirmed that the social issue for the socially disadvantaged classes was not a factor considered in the project of the Olympic Park, and the possibility of the permanence of the residents in the Vila was not discussed.

It is concluded that the decision to remove this population from their residences was arbitrary, with the following three main guiding variables as design decisions in ‘Barra da Tijuca’: (i) real estate speculation; (ii) social hygiene (a sociology concept that refers to the expulsion of social groups seen as undesirable by high-income classes, such as low-income neighbourhoods, homeless...); and (iii) profits, that the contractors related to the future housing developments will obtain. The exploratory analyses carried out in this research indicate that one of the reasons for the removals of families residing in ‘Vila do Autodromo’ is exclusively that the real estate speculation does not want to have a social housing area alongside a high-income development. Unfortunately, this situation seems to be the main legacy left by the 2016 Olympics in the ‘Barra da Tijuca’ neighbourhood.

According to the interview conducted with the person from EOM that accompanied the visit of the research team to the Olympic Park, the Project emphasizes its legacy to the population through one of its eight arenas. The arena called ‘Arena of the Future’, where the games of ‘handball’ in the Olympics and of ‘goalball’ in the Paralympic Games were held, was thought of as a temporary structure from its conception. His proposal was that after the games, the ‘Arena’ would be dismantled and rebuilt as four new schools.

In 2017, the mayor of the city of Florianopolis, in the south of Brazil, expressed interest in the structure of the ‘Arena of the Future’, and began negotiations with the Federal Government Sports Minister and the mayor of Rio de Janeiro. The mayor of Florianopolis argued that the city needed an area for sports and cultural practice, and a private-public partnership for the transportation, assembly, and management of the ‘Arena of the Future’ was studied. The proposed reconstruction of this arena in the form of four schools was not considered. The ‘Arena of the Future’ cost the federal government \$ 34 million US dollars. If the legacy meant to be left to the people of Rio de Janeiro was really to be taken into account, the proposal of transferring the arena to another city and consequently end up abandoning the original purpose of rebuilding it as four brand new schools should have never entered the agenda.

In addition, according to the interview with one of the architects of ECOM, no group was defined to study the legacy left by the Olympics to the city, being a “function for academic researchers to carry out after the event”, in his words. This statement is very worrying and proves the lack of urban and social commitment of the legacy left by the mega-event to the population of Rio de Janeiro. In 2010, the Mayor of the city created the so-called ‘legadômedro’, which consisted of a committee formed by his advisors with the function of giving scores of 1 to 5 for each project for the 2016 Olympics, considering economic, urban, social and economic indicators and environmental impacts. However, this is not planning the legacy, and in a participatory city-building process, such evaluations should come from the city's population, especially from residents living in the areas of intervention, not from the Mayor's advisors. This data should be published on the site [www.transparenciaolimpica.com.br](http://www.transparenciaolimpica.com.br);

however, up until 28 August 2018, the site did not contain any information about the Olympic legacy or the projects and resources applied in the 2016 Olympic Park. This website contains only news of general topics as how to protect e-mails, physical activities, makeup, and how to obtain a driver's license. This site creates much doubt about the seriousness of the approach that the local authority is taking regarding the importance of the Olympic Projects transparency and legacy.

Regarding the environmental and sustainability issues related to the Olympic Park project, the person from ECOM that accompanied the research team in the guided tour to the Park was questioned about the measures, in regard to these themes, which were part of the 2016 Rio Olympic Candidature. Her response was as follows: "The decontamination of the Jacarepagua Lagoon will be done, but not in time for the Olympics, it will be later." The lack of green space inside the Park was also questioned, and the following answer was given: "But this area was a racetrack, everything was paved, so there was not much to do ... in that area there that looks like a car parking lot will be the food court with several product stalls covered by temporary cover..." (Figure 14). It is important to emphasize that one of the arguments of Rio de Janeiro's candidature to host the 2016 Olympics was the concept of environmental sustainability. However, issues such as the decontamination of the Jacarepagua Lagoon were not treated as priority as they were supposed to be, and the Park's landscaping project reinforced the fact that the environmental issues, such as thermal comfort and microclimate, were not essential factors. The results found indicate a questionable scenario of what a sustainable candidature of the city for the Olympic Games should be. Additionally, they show a lack of commitment of all interested parts to the social inclusion of local residents in the areas of intervention.



Figure 14: Olympic Park in Rio, August 2015. The area on the left side was designed to be the food court

*Source: Portella 2015*

## Final Considerations

This study intended to first analyse the importance of favelas as a portrait of Brazilian urban life in its fullest form, contributing to a critical reflection on how urban policies and urban projects are designed to englobe social inclusion or to reinforce social segregation in Brazil. Considering the context of this paper, we can ask to what extent one should defend a gentrification process that does not respect low-income local residents and that does not preserve the quality of life of the majority of the population.

The data obtained from this research make clear that social inclusion has never been a guiding factor for the 2016 Olympic Park project, and even much less the works in its immediate surroundings. Private and speculative gentrification becomes preponderant over social interest, leaving as a legacy for the city, in 'Barra da Tijuca', an area destined to a high-income housing development with an urban design from the 1980s, aimed at private vehicles. A mega event that could have facilitated the development of urban works that are essential for the improvement of the lives of local residents in situations of social vulnerability in the city of Rio de Janeiro, culminated in stimulating the most negative sides of the gentrification process. Contradicting the arguments put forward in the city's candidature for the 2016 Olympics, the aspects of sustainability and social inclusion are not evidenced by the data analysed. The lack of a study of the legacy, from the point of view of including local population in the design process, was a decisive factor for the negative situation evidenced in the projects for the 2016 Olympics. Environment sustainability, which was one of the main components for the city's candidature to host the 2016 games, was mostly neglected.

It is hoped that this debate will result in new discussions on the subject so that experiences from Rio de Janeiro would not repeat. Situations of disregard for the low-income populations and valuation of the dominant classes by real estate speculation is no longer acceptable in a globalized world where social issues are emerging in several countries. In 2018, 9.6 per cent of the world's population continues to live in extreme poverty and more than 2 billion people live on less than \$2.50 a day. Therefore, the exploitation of public resources and the forced removal of low-income people from their homes to make room for works aimed at sports mega-events, which do not leave a social legacy to the local population that is more vulnerable, can no longer be tolerated in urban projects of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. The preparation of host cities for sports mega-events should be directly supervised by international bodies, such as the UN. Countries that do not meet key issues such as guarantees of social inclusion, decent housing rights for the most vulnerable and sustainable environment should not be allowed to host another mega-event for a period of time. Unfortunately, the Olympics of 2016 have left a negative urban and social legacy in Brazil, serving only as a negative example what should be avoided in other cities and countries.

## Bibliography

Bill Corcoran/IRIN. 2012. The psychological strain of living in Tin Can Town. The insider history on Emergencies. Retrieved from: <http://www.irinnews.org/report/96656/psychological-strain-living-tin-can-town>.

Carvalho, Roberto. Britto de. 2013. “Megaeventos esportivos: legados para a economia.” In *Legados de megaeventos esportivos*, edited by N. C. Marcellino, Chapter 6. Campinas: Papyrus.

Glass, Ruth. 1964. London: aspects of change. Series: Centre for Urban Studies report, no. 3. London: MacGibbon & Kee.

Google Maps. 2014. Aerial view of the ‘Vila do Autodromo’ in Rio before the removal of its residents. Adapted by Adriana Portella with the yellow marks and writing information.

Google Maps. 2016. Aerial view of the ‘Vila do Autodromo’ in Rio after the removal of the majority of its residents. Adapted by Adriana Portella with the yellow marks.

Google Maps, Street View. 2018. Views of ‘Abelardo Bueno’ Avenue, in ‘Barra da Tijuca’, Rio de Janeiro. An urban design, which totally focuses on the use of private cars. Retrieved from: <https://www.google.com.br/maps/@-22.9778154,-43.3956629,14.29z>

IAB-RJ. 2011. Resultado – Concurso Internacional para o Parque Olímpico – Rio 2016. Retrieved from: <https://concursosdeprojeto.org/2011/08/19/resultado-concurso-internacional-para-o-parque-olimpico-rio-2016/>

Jacobs, Jane. 1961. “The Death and Life of Great American Cities”. New York: Random House.  
Low, Setha M. 1992. ‘Symbolic Ties That Bind’. In: Altman I., Low S.M. (eds) *Place Attachment. Human Behavior and Environment* (Advances in Theory and Research), vol 12. 165-185. Springer, Boston, MA

Marcellino, Nelson Carvalho. (ed.) 2013. *Legados de megaeventos esportivos*. 1ed, v.1. Campinas: Papyrus Campinas.

Monteiro, Circe and Limeira, Juliana. 2012. ‘Revitalização, Habitação e Gentrificação.’ In *Plano de gestão da conservação urbana: conceitos e métodos*, edited by N. Lacerda and S. M. Zancheti, 262-279. Olinda: Centro de Estudos Avançados da Conservação Integrada.

Muñoz, Francesc 1997. “Historic evolution and urban planning typology of Olympic Villages”. In *Olympic Villages: a hundred years of urban planning and shared experiences*, edited by M. Moragas, M. Llinés, and B. Kidd, B. 27-51. Laussane: International Olympic Committee.

Paiva, Ellayne Kelly Gama de. 2013. *A cidade para o cidadão. O legado urbano dos Jogos Olímpicos*. PhD thesis. University of Brasília.

Pereira, Gisele Silva. 2011. *Decision-making in the planning process and the contribution of Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA): a case study based comparative analysis of major sports events in Brazil and England*. Ph.D. thesis. Oxford Brookes University.

Portella, Adriana, Pereira, Gisele Silva. 2018. *Insights on favelas*. Editora da UFPel: Pelotas.

Portella, Adriana. 2015. ‘Vila do Pan’ already converted into a residential high-income gated community in 2015 with infrastructure problems. JPEG file.

Portella, Adriana. 2015. 'Amanhã Museum', signed by the Spanish architect Calatrava, cost R\$ 215 million for the city. It is placed next to the oldest favela in Rio – 'Morro da Providência'. JPEG file.

Portella, Adriana. 2015. Stairs in 'Morro da Providência' and iron rails marked on the ground with the purpose of guiding the tourist to the safest areas of the favela. JPEG file.

Portella, Adriana. 2015. The View of 'Morro do Vidigal' from a local hostel. JPEG file.

Portella, Adriana. 2015. Wall left after demolition of a house by the local authority in 'Vila do Autodromo' in August 2015. On the walls, residents express their opinion in graffiti about the situation they were facing with the forced removals. JPGE file.

Portella, Adriana. 2015. We can see life in the streets in 'Morro da Providência', Rio de Janeiro. Informal settlements seem more effective than the formal streets of 'Barra da Tijuca' projected by the Olympics in 2016. JPEG file.

Rolnik, Raquel. 2010. *Kicked Out for the Cup? South Africa is accused of clearing Cape Town slums to clean up for the big event.* Accessed 2 September 2018. <https://raquelrolnik.wordpress.com/tag/megaeventos/page/3/>.

Rolnik, Raquel. 2011. 'Copa do Mundo e Jogos Olímpicos: O espetáculo e o mito'. Accessed 2 September 2018, <https://raquelrolnik.wordpress.com/2011/08/12/copa-do-mundo-e-jogos-olimpicos-o-espetaculo-e-o-mito/>.

Sarau para Todos. 2017. Retrieved from: <http://sarauxyz.blogspot.com/2017/01/gentrificacao-despejos-desrespeito-pelo.html#.W4MZ48IVjX4>.

Viva a Vila do Autodromo, Rio sem remoções. 2016. In 30 July 2016 the new houses were delivered to families in 'Vila do Autodromo'. Fanpage of Vila do Autodromo on facebook. Retrieved from: <https://www.facebook.com/vivaavilaautodromo/>