

Joshua Hammer - A Look Into Brazil's Makeover of Rio's Slums



Photo by Claudio Edinger

The Brazilian government's bold efforts to clean up the city's notoriously dangerous favelas is giving hope to people who live there - By *Joshua Hammer* - Photographs by Claudio Edinger - ***Smithsonian* magazine, January 2013**

Marcos Rodrigo Neves remembers the bad old days in Rocinha, the largest *favela*, or slum, in Rio de Janeiro. A baby-faced 27-year-old with a linebacker's build and close-cropped black hair, Rodrigo grew up dirt poor and fatherless in a tenement in Valão, one of the favela's most dangerous neighborhoods. Drug-trafficking gangs controlled the turf, and police rarely entered out of fear they could be ambushed in the alleys. "Many classmates and friends died of overdoses or in drug violence," he told me, sitting in the front cubicle of the Instituto Wark Rocinha, the tiny art gallery and teaching workshop he runs, tucked on a grimy alley in the heart of the favela.

Read more: [Joshua Hammer - A Look Into Brazils Makeover of Rios Slums](#)

Rem Koolhaas - Lagos

Ghana Housing Profile

Housing Sector Profile Series - UN Habitat, 2011

The Ghana Urban Housing Sector Profile is a comprehensive in-depth analysis of the urban housing sector, focusing on its strengths and weaknesses. The Profile contributes to the creation of a framework that enables provision of adequate housing for all. It builds a comprehensive understanding of the functioning of the urban housing sector that can serve as authoritative reference for all actors in the housing sector. It provides a series of recommendations for policy design and to the key stakeholders in the housing delivery system, including prioritized actions necessary for its improvement.

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Anna Majavu - South Africa: The Non-Existent Affordable Housing Programme (Opinion)

afrika.no December 2012. South African Civil Society Information Service (SAC SIS), by Anna Majavu

Johannesburg (South Africa) - The government's recent demolition of houses in Lenasia, apart from anything else, has exposed how inadequate the state is at providing housing for those who neither qualify for bank mortgages, nor for RDP houses.

The Lenasia families seem to fall into the category of those who qualify for so-called "gap housing" on the basis that they earn between R2200 and about R7500 per month and can therefore afford to pay for their homes. However, gap housing is being rolled out at a snail's pace.

There is much fanfare in a city when a "gap" social housing project of 100 or 200 units is unveiled. But these projects only happen about once a year. Many are not built close to the city and some look little better than the national government's upgraded RDP houses, or "Breaking New Ground" dwellings, even though they are much more expensive to buy or rent.

Read more: <http://www.afrika.no/>

Lee-Roy Chetty - Addressing the Housing Shortage in South Africa

Mail & Guardian. December 1, 2012. Access for the poor to urban land and housing is one of the main challenges facing policy makers in South Africa.

Estimates suggest that 26% of households in the six metropolitan areas in our country live in in-formal dwellings, often “illegally” and with limited access to services.

Movement from the informal to the formal sector is also low.

The growth of informal settlement in cities is often the upshot of unplanned urbanisation or lack of coordination. The concept of new urbanism emphasises coordination between long term land use, housing and transportation planning as an essential pillar for smart growth.

It recognises the importance of spatial or geographic proximity, layout and an integrated design of those uses.

Conversely, a lack of efficient integration can throttle sustainable development and eventually leads to an inferior growth path with suboptimal housing, educational, employment and service opportunities.

Read more: [Chetty - Addressing the housing shortage in South Africa](#)

Melissa Fernández Arrigiota - Constructing ‘The Other’, Practicing Resistance: Public Housing and Community Politics

in Puerto Rico

PhD thesis, 2010, *The London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE)*.

This thesis evaluates the colonial productions and contestations of Puerto Rican public housing and its residents as urban 'others'. It combines a historical analysis of the political, spatial and material trajectory of the island's projects with an ethnography of the resistances enacted by a group of residents- mainly women- from one such complex called '*Las Gladiolas*' against an impending order of demolition and displacement. I argue that while a context of socio-spatial exclusion and environmental determinism has pervaded the constructions of these postcolonial '*projects*' in ways that have significantly discriminated against its residents, public housing has never been and can never be completed according to that limited governmental design - which today exists under the rubric of urban redevelopment - mainly because communities of solidarity, dissent and conflict emerge simultaneously with and against those formulations, taking on a life of their own in ways that collude with and escape rigid technocratic formulations of housing policy. The research presented emphasizes the symbolic struggle and material reality embedded in *Las Gladiolas*'s community politics which resists and disrupts a homogeneous vision of past, present and future urban space.

The historical analysis highlights the ways in which '*othering*' was set in place within the colonial context of Puerto Rico's urban development in a way which has allowed for the continued stigmatization of public housing projects and for the reproduction of residents' disadvantage according to raced, gendered and classed discriminations. Those distinctions of difference also created the conditions for particular forms of resistance to emerge. The ethnographic data tells the story of how the political and physical enactment of the buildings' deterioration intersected with residents' informal, institutional and legal resistance to relocation. It shows how the contemporary production, experiences and contestations over public housing are not fixed, but multiple and highly ambiguous. The complex interplay that emerges between political, social and material elements demonstrates that the boundaries separating *Las Gladiolas* from its urban environ, and Puerto Rican housing agencies from the American ones, are in fact open and porous, fluctuating according to use, appropriations, and political and legal transformations.

Full text: [M.Fernandez Arrigiota - Constructing The Other](#)