Favelas in the Media:

How the Global Narrative on Favelas Changed During Rio's Mega-Event Years

1094 articles - eight global outlets - 2008-2016

Research conducted by Catalytic Communities in Rio de Janeiro
December 2016

CatComm.org

Contents

Andrea Cangialosi

Introduction

Rio's favelas are among the most stigmatized urban communities in the world. As some of the modern world's oldest informal settlements, today they constitute affordable housing stock for 24% of the city's population. Built and constantly developed through collective action in spite of historical neglect by authorities, favelas are incubators of culture and home to the workers that sustain the city. By 2050, around one third of the world's population is expected to be living in informal urban settlements, so the future development and perceptions of Rio's favelas have the potential to influence development globally.

Although stigma is often the result of deep-rooted perceptions, the media plays an important role in influencing those perceptions, whether by reinforcing, strengthening and perpetuating negative stereotypes or by challenging and gradually eroding them.

In October 2009, the International Olympic Committee announced Rio de Janeiro as the host of the 2016 Summer Olympics. With the 2014 World Cup already scheduled for Brazil, it was clear that Brazil, and Rio in particular, would receive intensified media coverage over the course of its event preparations and celebrations. With that intensified focus on Rio came unprecedented international media attention to Rio's favelas.

Catalytic Communities (CatComm) saw this period as an opportunity for international journalists to take substantial steps towards ending the stigma around favelas by producing thoughtful and nuanced coverage about them, ultimately influencing the discourse, policies and initiatives around informal settlements around the world.

One year after the World Cup we produced a preliminary report looking at how mainstream international media coverage of Rio favelas had changed since the 2009 Olympic announcement and what could be improved ahead of the 2016 Olympics. Now, with the Olympics behind us, this full report examines reporting from October 2008, one year before the Olympics were awarded to Rio, through August 2016.

Focusing on eight mainstream English-language print and online news outlets from the United States, the United Kingdom, and Qatar (*Al Jazeera*) we have tracked and examined 1,094 articles that mention the word "favela," **seeking to answer the following questions**, with respect to time and outlet:

1. How often have international media covered favelas from 2008 to 2016? **In what contexts?**
2. **Which favelas** and zones are covered?
3. **Whose perspectives** about favelas are given a platform?
4. **What language** is used to describe favelas?
5. **What topics** are discussed in articles mentioning favelas?
6. What are the **predominant portrayals** of favelas? What are the most common negative stigmas and positive attributes?
7. **What imagery** accompanies articles about favelas?

Additionally, we examined:

8. How did media coverage during the **Olympic month** itself compare to coverage overall?
9. How did articles written **by favela residents** compare to the rest of the dataset?

Luiz Baltar

Executive Summary

The most stark change in mainstream international coverage of Rio's favelas over the last eight years is the immense expansion of coverage. There were nearly seven times as many articles published in 2015-2016 as in 2008-2009. So explosive was the coverage growth leading up to and culminating in the Olympic month that August 2016 was responsible for 14% of all articles in our dataset. As for articles in which favelas were a main subject, there was a nearly tenfold increase from the 2008-2009 period to the 2015-2016 period.

42% of all articles referred only to favelas in general without naming a specific community. During the World Cup when journalists were reporting on events across the country, South Zone Rocinha's relatively easy access drew a disproportionate amount of coverage; for the Olympics, when international journalists focused in on the city of Rio de Janeiro, coverage was spread wider across the city, particularly to Complexo do Alemão and Complexo da Maré in the North Zone and City of God in the West Zone. The only favela to have consistently increasing coverage over time was Vila Autódromo, which corresponds to the increasing visibility of residents' powerful campaign against forced eviction as the Games approached.

Favela residents were directly quoted in 112 articles (out of 315, or 36%) in 2015-2016, and in only 7 articles (out of 45, or 16%) in 2008-2009, marking a 16-fold increase in visibility for favela voices. August 2016, in particular, saw an even higher percentage of articles that gave space to favela voices.

"Slum" is clearly the word used the most as both a general alternative and a primary alternative for "favela," followed by "shantytown" and "community." That said, over 450 articles (42%) do not use any translation or alternative for "favela." Contrary to the trends that appeared in our preliminary report, from our expanded data there does not appear to be clear evidence that the use of alternatives for "favela" is decreasing, nor that there is a clear decline in the use of "slum" and "shantytown." More neutral alternatives like "community" and "neighborhood" do increase in use over time, and are more often used as a primary alternative to define "favela" in later years than earlier. Certain outlets have adopted default translations for "favela" with mixed results for accurate and nuanced reporting.

For articles where favelas were the main subject, "violence or drugs" was the most frequent topic mentioned followed by "police" and "pacification." "Violence or drugs" and "pacification or occupation" were the most common main topics, followed by "2016 Olympics," "Favela

culture," and "Evictions/removals." Over time, "violence or drugs" was less commonly the main topic, but there was no decrease in how often it was a mentioned topic. In terms of who the articles portrayed as violent, there was an increase in articles that portrayed only police as violent. This demonstrates increasing attention to Rio and Brazil's immensely high police killing rates as a newsworthy story in itself. There also appears to be a very small increase in the percentage of articles featuring positive topics such as community media and community-led social projects."

"Sites of violence" and "sites of drugs/gangs" were the most commonly portrayed attributes of favelas. In both the World Cup year and the Olympics year, the percentage of articles that portrayed favelas as sites of violence and sites of drugs/gang activity spiked in comparison to the years directly before. This may reflect an overall increased media concern with security issues around the events themselves, and the influx of more journalists looking to write on violence in favelas.

The most common positive attribute was that favelas are a "source of culture." There was also a positive gradual increase in the percentage of articles that explicitly portrayed favelas as having a strong "sense of community."

The most common trait ascribed to favela residents was "financially poor." We were happy to find that residents were more commonly portrayed as "active agents of change" and "entrepreneurial" than as "unhappy, desperate or miserable."

Nearly 46% of articles gave overwhelmingly negative portrayals of favelas, which corresponds with the high numbers of articles focused on violence and drug/gang activity in these communities. A slightly smaller percentage (44%) were neutral, while only 7% were overwhelmingly positive about favelas. About 4% of articles suggested that pacification made favelas better places. These ratios did not change significantly over time.

Seventeen articles were written or co-written by favela residents: one in *The New York Times* and sixteen as part of the *Guardian*'s "View from the favelas" series. 100% of these articles covered "violence or drugs" while "pacification" and "police" were the next most regular topics, but several other topics were mentioned in more than 50% of articles, which suggests articles by favela residents covered more diverse topics than the average article in the overall dataset. Differing substantially from the overall dataset, not one of the favela-authored pieces portrayed residents as the solo perpetrators of violence, while all seventeen articles mentioned a favela by name. Favela authors preferred "community" and "neighborhood" to describe their homes and only one of their articles used "slum." And while favelas were often portrayed as "sites of violence," they were more frequently portrayed as "places with a sense of community."

Andrea Cangialosi

Methodology

With oversight from CatComm's Executive Director, Theresa Williamson, Ph.D., and board member and Lecturer of Political Science at the University of California Berkeley, Wendy Sinek, Ph.D., CatComm Research Coordinator Cerianne Robertson, a graduate of Harvard University, designed and executed the study over the course of two and a half years, drawing on experience reporting and monitoring international reporting on Rio's favelas with CatComm, as well as previous academic research on media portrayals of highly stigmatized communities and organizations. A team of interns and volunteers with CatComm were responsible for coding articles and supporting the study design: Lara Mancinelli, Nashwa Al-sharki, Gabi Weldon, Megan Griffin, Amy Rodenberger, Claudia Sandell, Aldair Arriola-Gomez, Nicole Pena, Sam Salvesen, Benito Aranda-Comer, Marcela Benavides, Gabriela Brand, Clare Huggins, Jody van Mastrigt, Ciara Long, Rhona Mackay, Alex Besser, Sophia Zaia, Chris Peel, Raven Hayes, Natalie Southwick, Juliana Ritter, Mikayla Ribeiro.

For selecting English-language news sources, we aimed to **include outlets**:

- which produce a lot of material about favelas
- with high readership
- that are read by leading decision-makers in a variety of fields
- which publish in print and online
- which, together, reflect diverse positions on the political spectrum

With these criteria in mind, we initially selected *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, and *USA Today* from the US, and the *Guardian*, *The Telegraph*, and the *Daily Mail* from the UK. Since the preliminary report, we have added *Al Jazeera*, for a uniquely non-US/Europe perspective, and *AP*, which as a news wire service influences the content of countless other global outlets.

We used Lexis Nexis to search for article that mentioned "favela" during our specified time periods. Partway through the research, it became clear that Lexis Nexis results for some outlets were including most but not every single article in our parameters; we therefore verified and supplemented the Lexis Nexis searches by google searches and the outlets' search engines, where possible.

Note that our method of selecting articles overlooks any articles that use only alternatives like "slum" or "community" instead of using "favela" at all, which certainly would be interesting and useful to the study; this limitation was necessary in order to maintain a consistent methodology of identifying articles within a reasonable scope for this project. From the original search results, we **excluded results** that:

- Appeared only in print (and not online).
- Lacked a written component (ie. only a video, or only a photo slideshow with captions).
- Were calendar listings, advertisements, or live text feeds.
- Mentioned favelas only in the context of another Brazilian city, outside of the state of Rio de Janeiro. We did include any article that used "favela" to describe non-Brazilian cities, as this constitutes an example of the word "favela" being used beyond its particular meaning and context (of informal communities in Brazil), which is therefore interesting in terms of how perceived parallels between favelas and other informal or low-income settlements lead people to incorrectly label other communities with the term.
- Used "favela" because it was somebody or something's name, where there was no connection to Rio's favela communities.
- Were exact repeats of an already coded article from the same outlet; we kept articles that included replicated sections but were not exact repeats.

After these removals, we were left with 1,094 articles, distributed unevenly among the eight outlets.

Articles by outlet

- Guardian — 29.8%
- Telegraph — 17%
- New York Times — 16.5%
- AP — 12.1%
- Daily Mail — 11.8%
- Wall Street Journal — 7%
- Al Jazeera
- USA Today
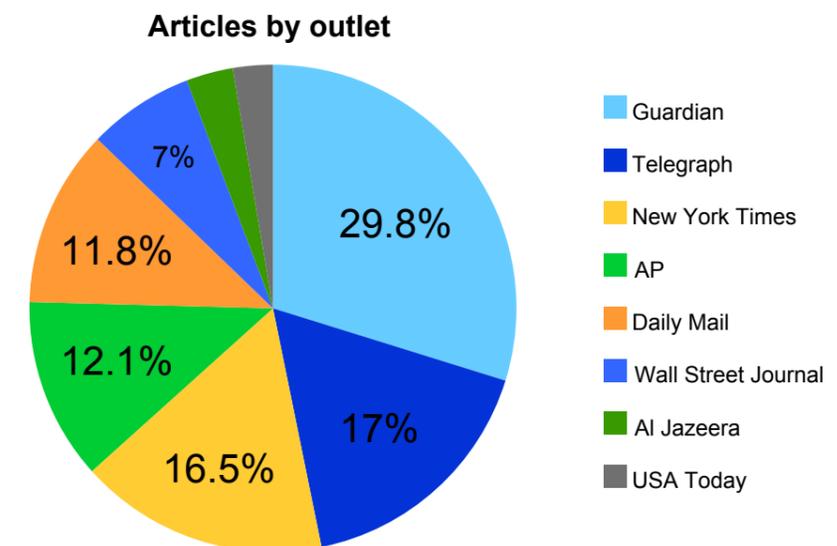
Most outlets produced the greatest number of articles that mention favelas in the (11-month) year building up to the Olympics (2015-2016). The exceptions were *The Telegraph* and *Al Jazeera*, which both hit their records in the World Cup year (2013-2014). Still, there was an overall trend of increasing articles, **with nearly seven times as many articles published in 2015-2016 as in 2008-2009.**

That there were slightly more articles in the 2012-2013 period than in 2014-2015 may be explained by the Brazil-wide protests in July 2013 that brought issues of inequality and spending priorities to the forefront of national discussion.

Outlets	Oct 2008 – Sept 2009	Oct 2009 – Sept 2010	Oct 2010 – Sept 2011	Oct 2011 – Sept 2012	Oct 2012 – Sept 2013	Oct 2013 – Sept 2014	Oct 2014 – Sept 2015	Oct 2015 – Aug 2016	TOTAL # OF ARTICLES
NYT	5	13	17	21	21	44	15	45	181
WSJ	1	2	7	3	9	15	8	32	77
USA	0	0	1	1	1	6	4	16	29
Guar.	27	30	34	13	53	56	35	78	326
Tele.	9	16	11	28	18	45	21	38	186
DMail	1	8	4	4	9	24	23	56	129
AP	2	4	4	9	30	23	20	40	132
AJ	0	4	5	0	0	11	4	10	34
TOTAL	45	77	83	79	141	224	130	315	1094

Articles per year
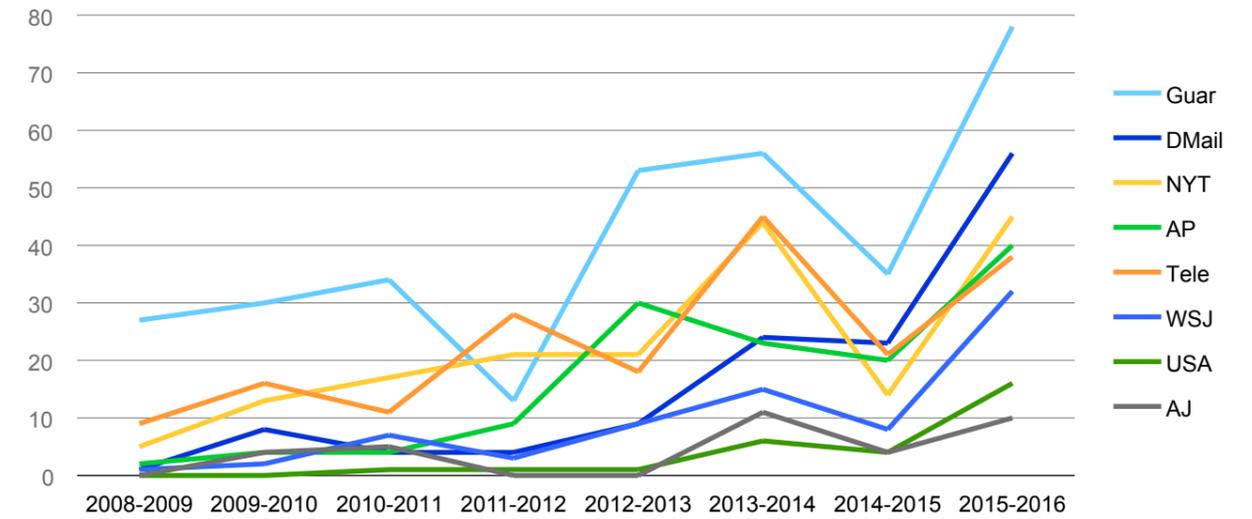
Month by month data shows the particular spike in articles around the World Cup and Olympics themselves, in June and July 2014, and July and August 2016. August 2016 had a record of 156 articles mentioning favelas across the eight outlets, up from 38 in July 2016. In other words, **August 2016 was responsible for 14% of all articles.**

We developed a standardized survey form to code each article and tested the survey form's consistency with multiple independent readers, first in "Phase 1" research for the preliminary report, and then again after editing some questions before the expanded "Phase 2" research. The 329 articles coded in Phase 1 were all read by Cerianne. In Phase 2, the other 762 articles were each coded independently by two readers who then compared answers in a tested process to maximize consistency.

The coding team analyzed the articles as they appeared on the outlets' websites, or in the case of some *AP* articles, as they appeared on other websites.

Biblioteca Elias José.

Findings

01. Centrality

In almost half (502) of the articles, favelas were just mentioned once, while in the rest (592) gave favelas more attention, either as a main subject or setting ("Main subject" - 299), or as one of several topics ("Secondary subject" - 293).
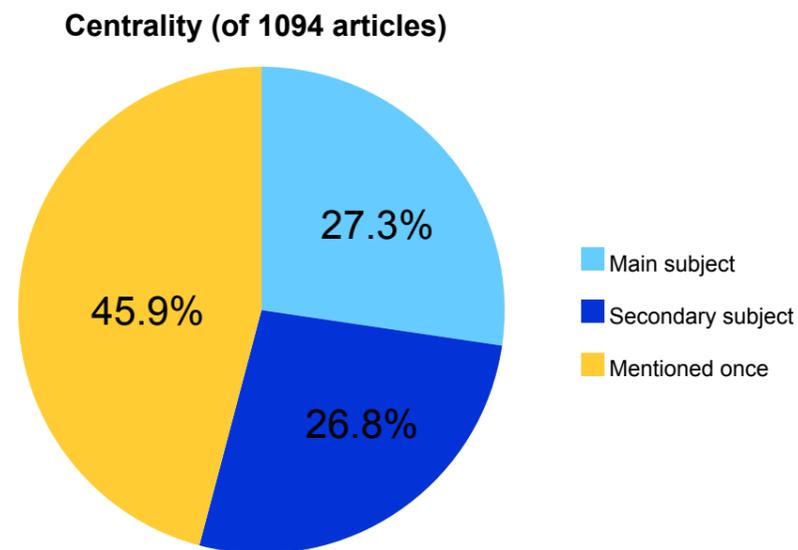
By year:

Accompanying the general growth of articles mentioning favelas, we can see a **nearly tenfold growth in the number of articles in which favelas were a "Main subject" from the 2008-2009 period to the 2015-2016 period.** 2008-2009 was the year with the greatest percentage of articles that just mentioned favelas once (66%), while 2015-2016 was the year with the greatest percentage of articles that treated favelas more substantively (60%).

Centrality (of 1094 articles)

27.3% Main subject
26.8% Secondary subject
45.9% Mentioned once

Centrality by Year

Main subject
Secondary subject
Mentioned once
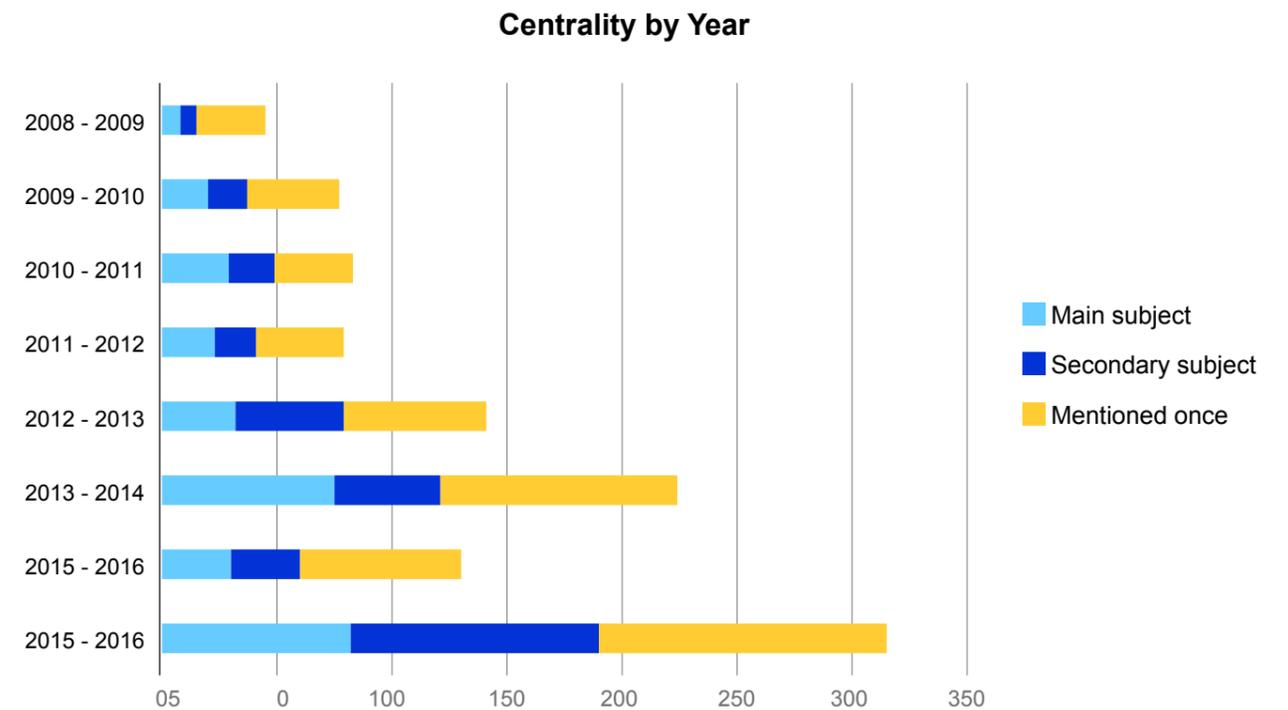
02. Favela Specificity

FAVELA SPECIFICITY

42% of all articles referred only to favelas in general (e.g. "Rio's vibrant favelas were the incubators of samba and funk."). 10% discussed a specific favela without naming it (e.g. "He grew up in a favela in Rio."), while the rest (48%) identified at least one specific favela by name.

Favela specificity

- 41.5% Favelas in general
- 9.7% Unnamed favela
- 48.8% Named favela
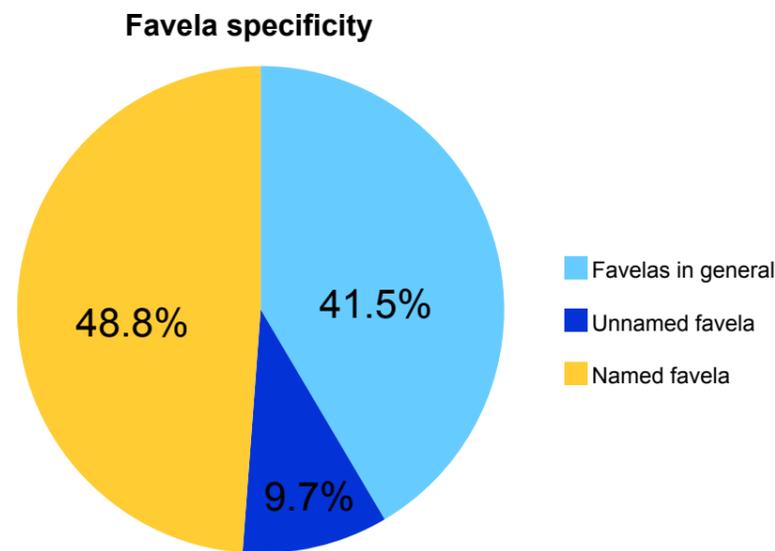
Identifying specific favelas by name and avoiding generalizations is important for accurate portrayals of Rio de Janeiro because there are over 1,000 favelas in the metropolitan area with a tremendous amount of variation from one to another.

WHICH FAVELA?

In the 534 articles that named specific favelas, some communities received considerably more mentions that others.

Favelas mentioned 1-3 times

Favelas mentioned 4 or more times
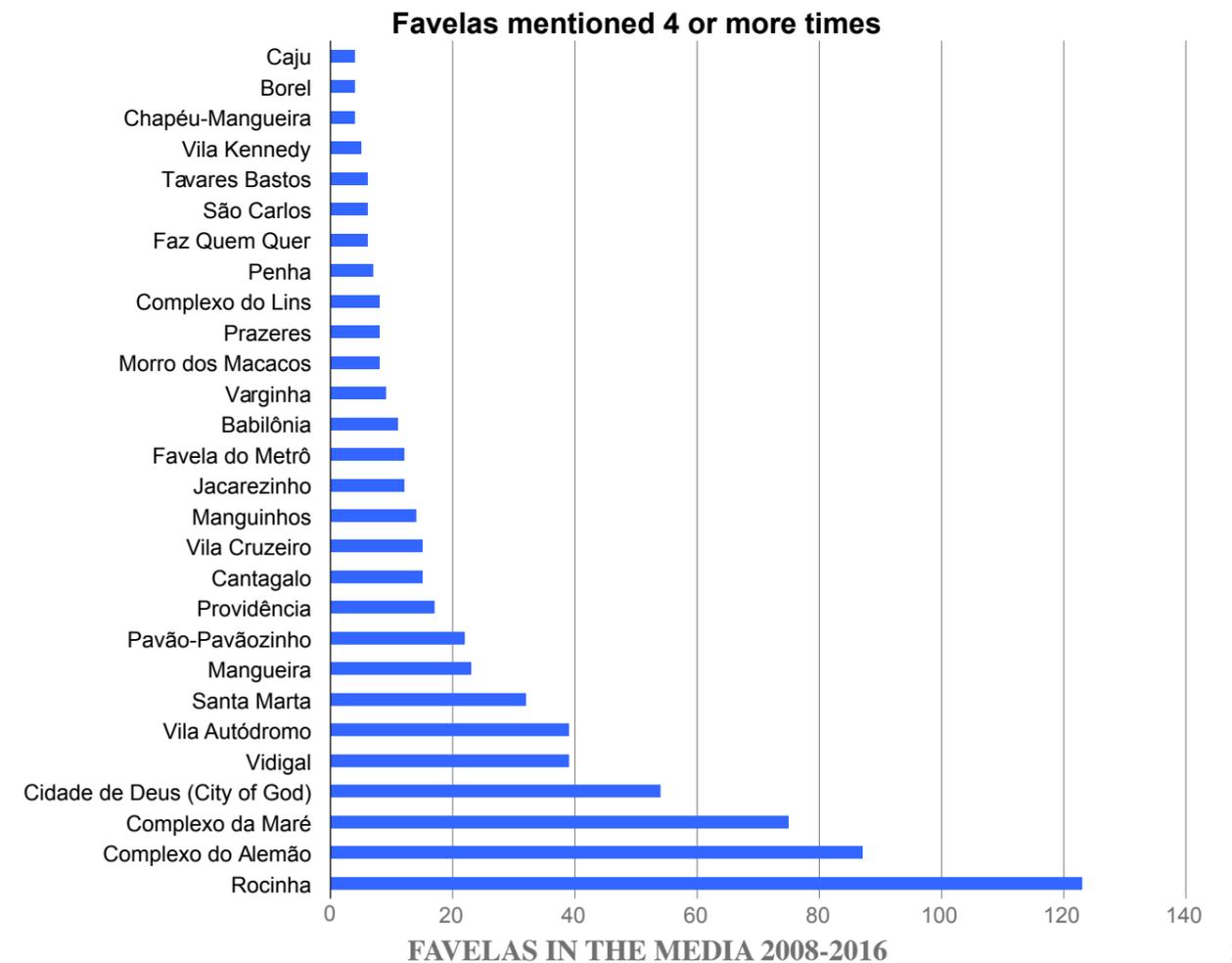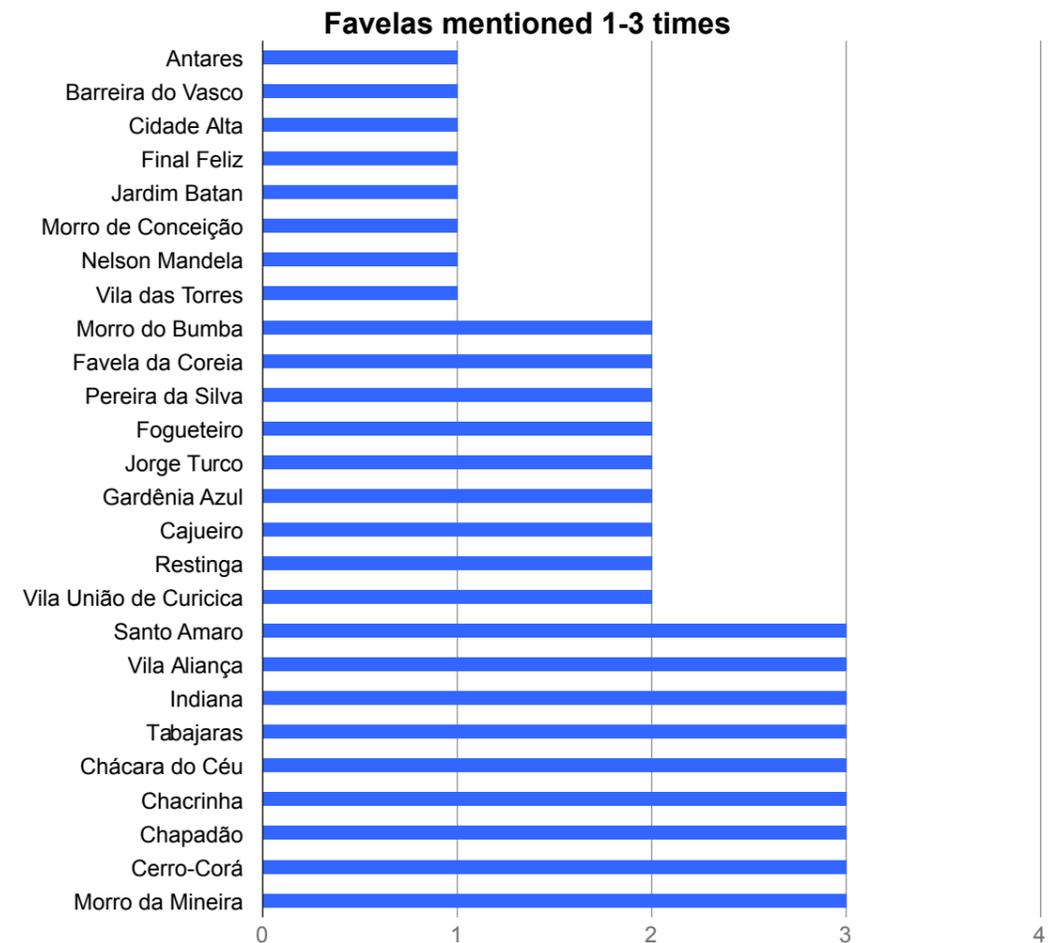
By Year

The table below lists the favelas mentioned most and second most in each year, along with the number of articles that mentioned them.

| Time period	Favela mentioned most (#)	Favela mentioned second most (#)
2008-2009	City of God (4)	Santa Marta (3)
2009-2010	Morro dos Macacos (7)	Complexo do Alemão (3)
2010-2011	Complexo do Alemão (10)	Vila Cruzeiro (9)
2011-2012	Rocinha (15)	Complexo do Alemão (12)
2012-2013	Rocinha (13)	Vidigal, Varginha (9)
2013-2014	Rocinha (52)	Complexo da Maré (20)
2014-2015	Vila Autódromo (10)	Complexo do Alemão (10)
2015-2016	Complexo da Maré (40)	Complexo do Alemão (31)

Although Rocinha appears dominant from the general graph of favela mentions, the table above shows it did not receive the most mentions in each year. In fact, the attention it received peaked in the World Cup year (2013-2014) and fell significantly after. While Rocinha stood out far beyond other favelas in attention during that World Cup year, the Olympic year saw articles featuring a wider range of favelas, with five favelas (or favela complexes) mentioned in more than 20 articles: Complexo da Maré, Complexo do Alemão, Rocinha (29), City of God (26), and Vila Autódromo (23). **During the World Cup when journalists were reporting on events across the country, South Zone Rocinha's relatively easy access may have drawn disproportionate amount of coverage; for the Olympics, where journalists focused in on the city of Rio de Janeiro, coverage was wider.** Furthermore, by the 2015-2016 period, a continued uptick in violence and further blows to the pacification process drew more attention to those favelas that are most contested—including Maré, Alemão, and City of God—rather than the generally more stable favelas in the South Zone.

If we look at those five favelas that received the most coverage in the Olympic year, interesting trends emerge. **The only favela to have consistently increasing coverage over time is Vila Autódromo,** which has been widely recognized for its successful relationship with international media. Vila Autódromo's residents' own use of media on Facebook built a sense of urgency as evictions continued and enabled supporters and journalists to follow their struggle closely. RioOnWatch also played a key role here: it published 207 articles mentioning Vila Autódromo through September 2016, including coverage of the community in

the beginning stages of organizing against Olympic evictions. In comparison, the community received no coverage in the studied eight major outlets until the 2011-2012 period. The amount of Vila Autódromo coverage on RioOnWatch increased over time and by 2016, it was a deliberate CatComm strategy to cover the neighborhood almost weekly in RioOnWatch articles and nearly daily in @RioONWire tweets to encourage further media coverage.

The other four favelas or favela complexes saw more ups and downs, with all four dropping coverage in the year in between the World Cup and Olympics. Rocinha stands out as the only community to reach its (very high) peak in the World Cup year. City of God is the only community of the five that did not see an increase in coverage in the World Cup year over the previous one; its jump in the Olympic year is in part because of its relative proximity to the Olympic Park and, crucially, because of resident Rafaela Silva's gold medal victory in Olympic judo. Even with Silva's media moment, the "most famous" favela thanks to the City of God film did not dominate favela media coverage.

Favela mentions over time
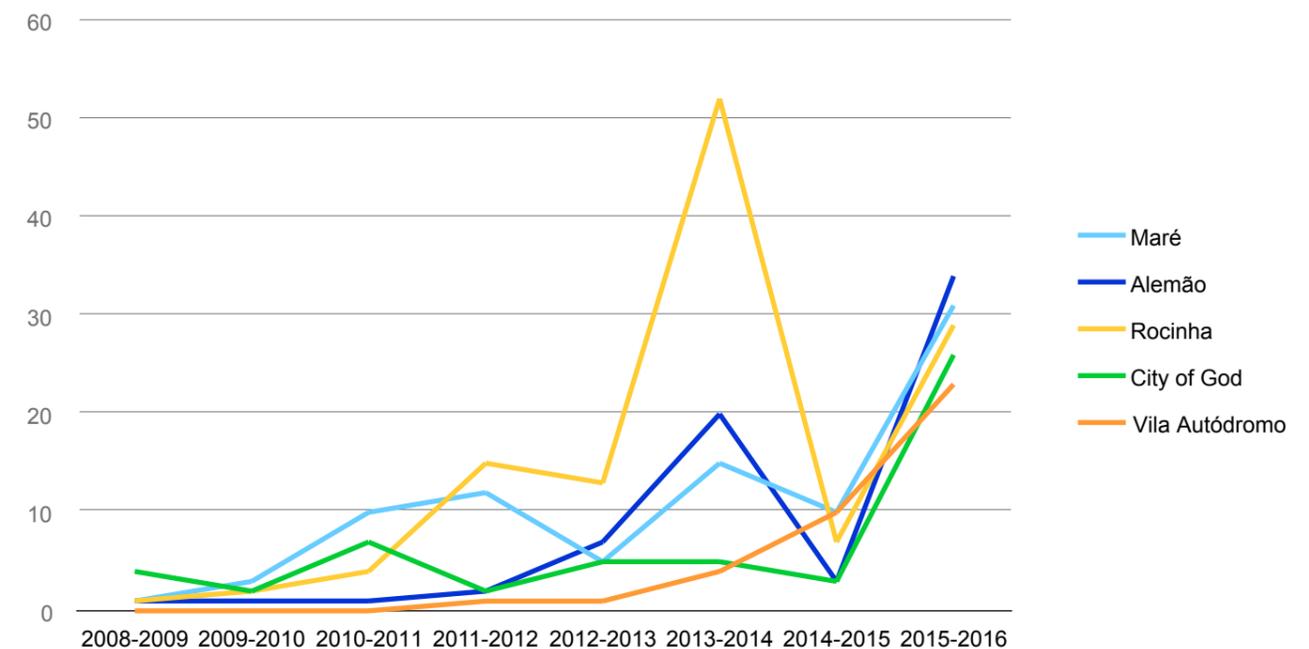
By outlet:

| Outlet	Favela mentioned most (#)	Favela mentioned second most (#)
New York Times	Complexo do Alemão (16)	City of God (11)
Wall Street Journal	Rocinha (13)	Complexo do Alemão (11)
USA Today	Rocinha (5)	Vila Autódromo (4)
Guardian	Rocinha (42)	Complexo do Alemão (29)
Telegraph	Rocinha (22)	Complexo do Alemão (12)
Daily Mail	Rocinha (15)	Complexo da Maré (13)
AP	Rocinha (10)	Santa Marta, Vila Autódromo (7)
Al Jazeera	Complexo do Alemão (5)	Rocinha (4)

WHICH ZONE?

51% of articles made it clear what zone of Rio they were discussing, by naming either the zone(s) or favela(s) explicitly. The remaining 49% of articles either referred to favelas in general—"Many tourists are planning to visit a favela."—or did not disclose the region of an unnamed favela—"She trained in the favela where she was born." Since 52% of articles did not name a specific favela, we can assume 3% of articles specified the zone without the favela (e.g. "She trained in the West Zone favela where she was born.").

This is problematic because the urban landscape of the city changes substantially from one zone to another:

- The South Zone encompasses popular tourist sites and the residences and spaces of Rio's elite, with historic and consolidated favelas dotting the hillsides and currently experiencing price hikes and market displacement;
- Centro is mainly an employment hub but also home to working-class inhabitants and the site of the rapid government-led Port redevelopment next to Rio's first favela and region of utmost importance with regard to Rio's African heritage;
- The North Zone is a post-industrial working class region, traditionally marginalized and deficient in public services, with confrontations between police and drug traffickers used as an excuse for this neglect; and
- The enormous West Zone, developed recently and the site of many recent evictions in its closer-in contested zones, is a mix of distant low-lying working-class militia-dominated neighborhoods, with the exception of the growing elite enclave of Barra da Tijuca. The West Zone will be the location of the Olympic Village.

Our Phase 1 research showed the South Zone receiving disproportionately high coverage compared to other parts of the city, but the inclusion of more time periods into the study shows this is not always the case. **Overall, 236 articles referred to North Zone favelas while 225 articles referred to South Zone favelas.**

Which zone?
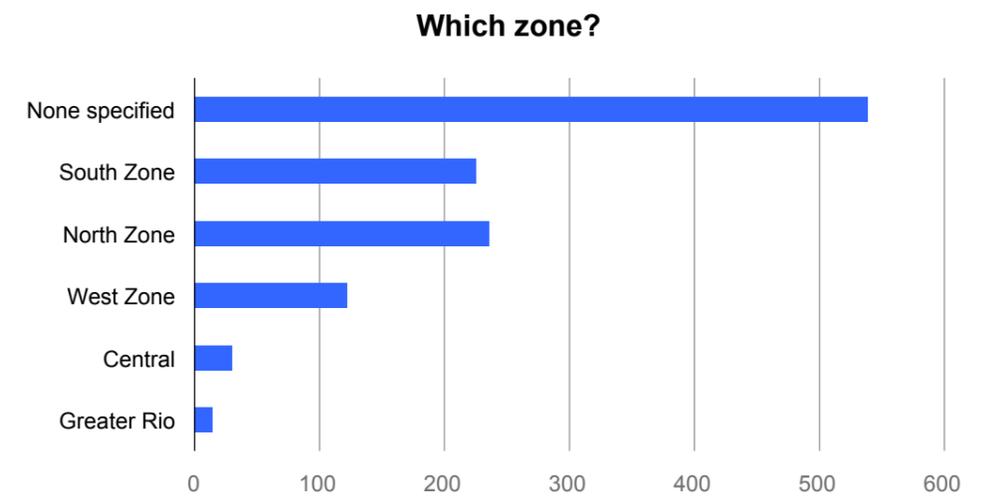
By year:

Mirroring coverage of Rocinha, South Zone coverage peaked in the 2013-2014 World Cup year. The Olympics drew attention to other parts of the city. North Zone coverage in the 2015-2016 year focused in large part on Complexo do Alemão and Complexo da Maré but was also boosted by attention to favelas like Mangueira, overlooking the Maracanã opening and closing ceremonies. The West Zone favelas did not receive a noticeable boost in coverage due to the World Cup, but peaked in the Olympic year thanks to coverage of Vila Autódromo, City of God, and Olympic sites in the West Zone in general.
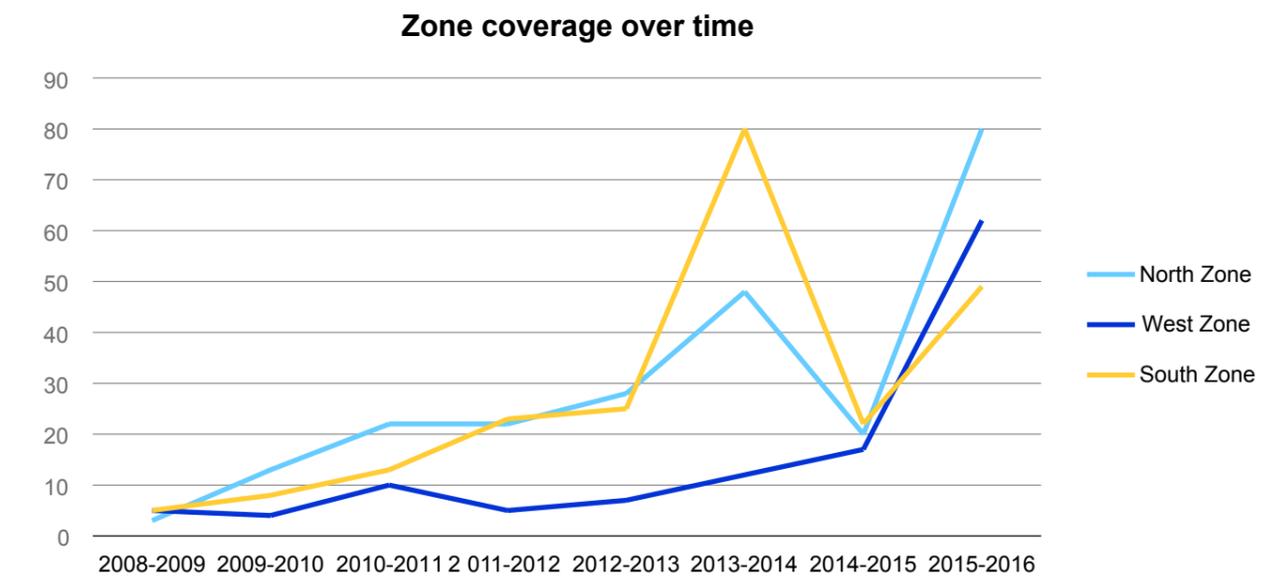
Zone coverage over time

By outlet:

The New York Times, *The Wall Street Journal*, the *Guardian*, *AP*, and *Al Jazeera* all covered the North Zone more than the other zones. *USA Today* gave most coverage to the South Zone, followed by the West. *The Telegraph* and the *Daily Mail* gave most coverage to the South Zone followed by the North.

To assess what kind of sources articles cited for information or opinions about favelas, we tracked the categories of people who were either quoted directly or referenced indirectly (e.g. "The police said that…," "According to one resident…"). For articles in which favelas were the main subject, we coded the sources of all quotes and references, but for articles in which favelas were a secondary subject or only mentioned once, we only coded quotes in the relevant paragraphs. This allows us to get a sense of whose perspectives about favelas or directly related issues make it into these articles.

The graph below shows the number of articles (in the Phase 2 data collection period only) that cited each of the given categories of people.

Number of articles citing the source
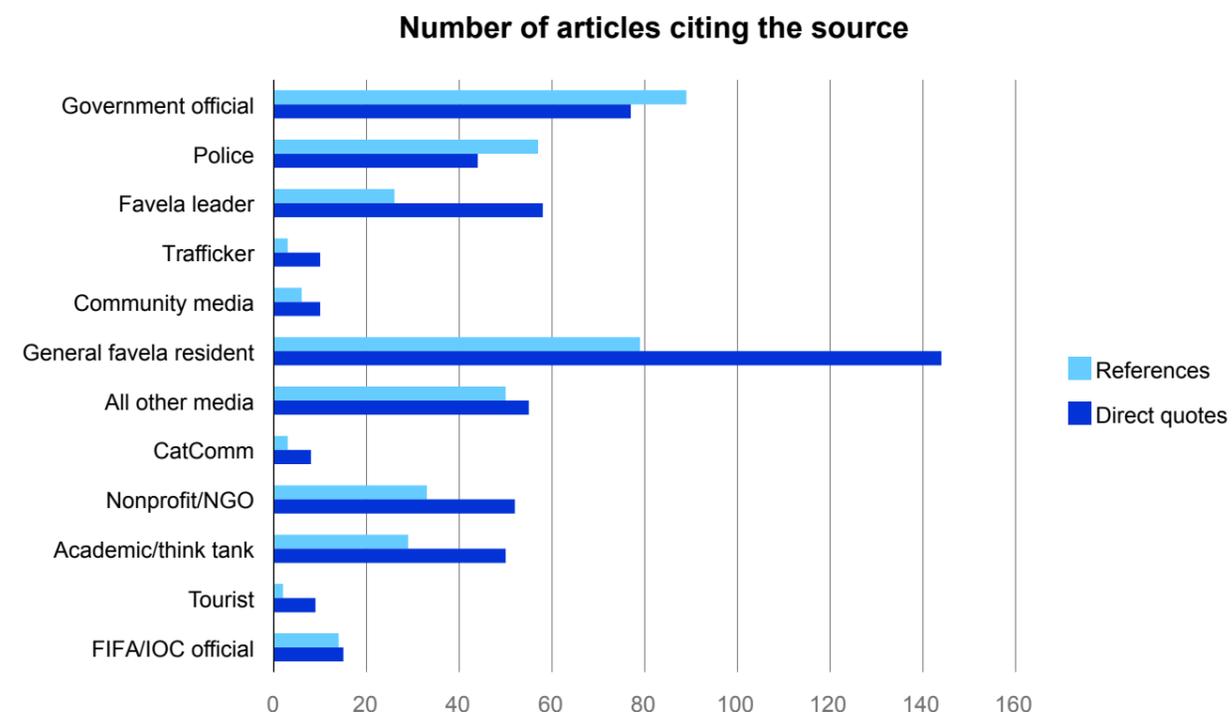
Of the 765 articles coded in phase 2, 407 (53%) had no direct quotes pertaining to favelas. For the 358 articles that did quote someone about favelas, the following graph shows which source type was quoted the most, measured by number of quoted words. **The "general favela residents" is the group that is quoted most in articles,** and that group's dominance expands when we add the "favela leader," "trafficker," and "community media" groups to form a single "favela resident" group.

Most quoted source type

- General favela resident
- Government official
- All other media
- Favela leader
- Nonprofit/NGO
- Academic/think tank
- Police
- Tourist
- FIFA/IOC official
- Trafficker
- CatComm
- Community media
- Other
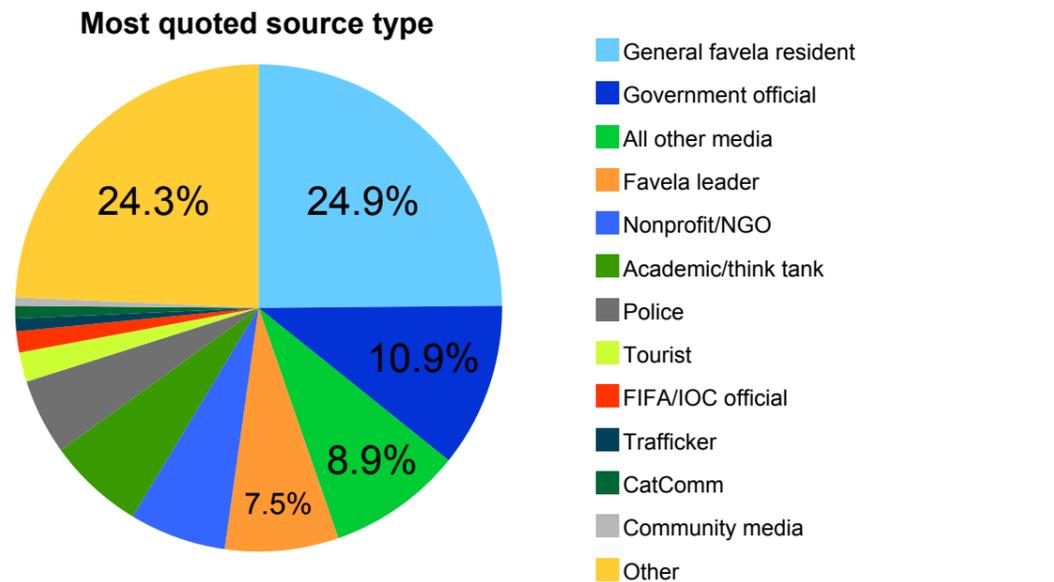
The "Other" category here included (but were not limited to): Brazilians and other residents of Brazil who do not live in favelas; people who created products about favelas like film directors, authors, video game designers, fashion designers and artists; government officials and royal family members from other countries; Pope Francis and other religious leaders; Olympic and World Cup athletes.

By year:

At the most basic level of comparison, **favela residents were directly quoted in 112 articles (out of 315, or 36%) in 2015-2016, and in only 7 articles (out of 45, or 16%) in 2008-2009, marking a 16-fold increase in visibility for favela voices.** The following graph tracks the growth over time of our four different categories of favela voices, as well as an overall favela voices total.

Number of articles quoting source type
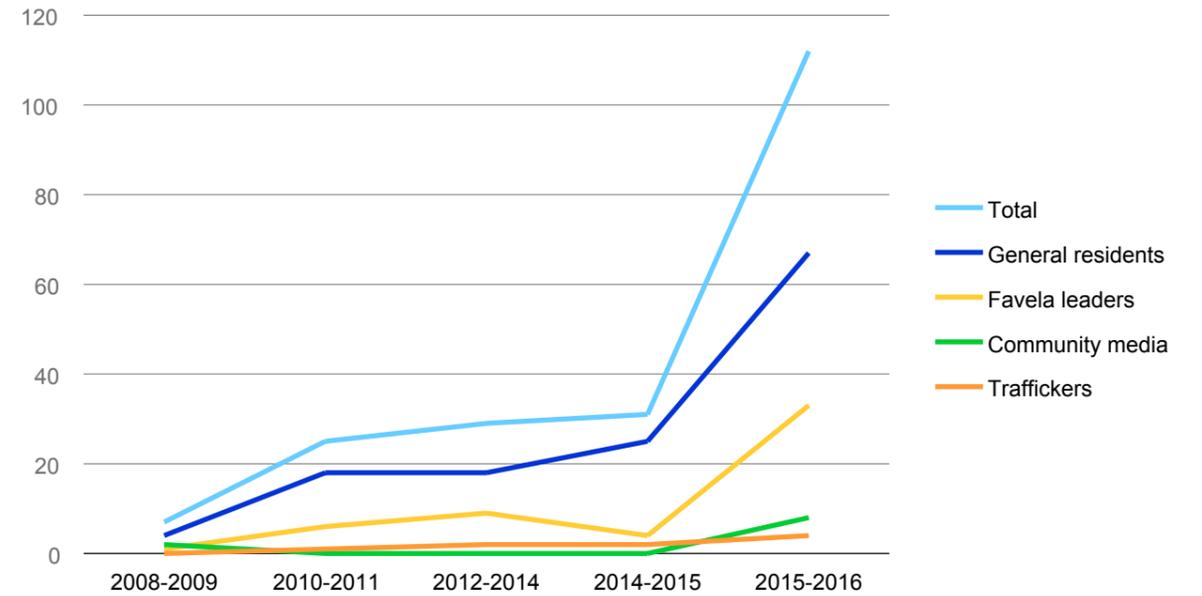
Of all articles that mention favelas, **the percentage of articles that quoted favela residents also increased from the 2008-2009 period to the 2015-2016 period.**

Percent of articles quoting source type
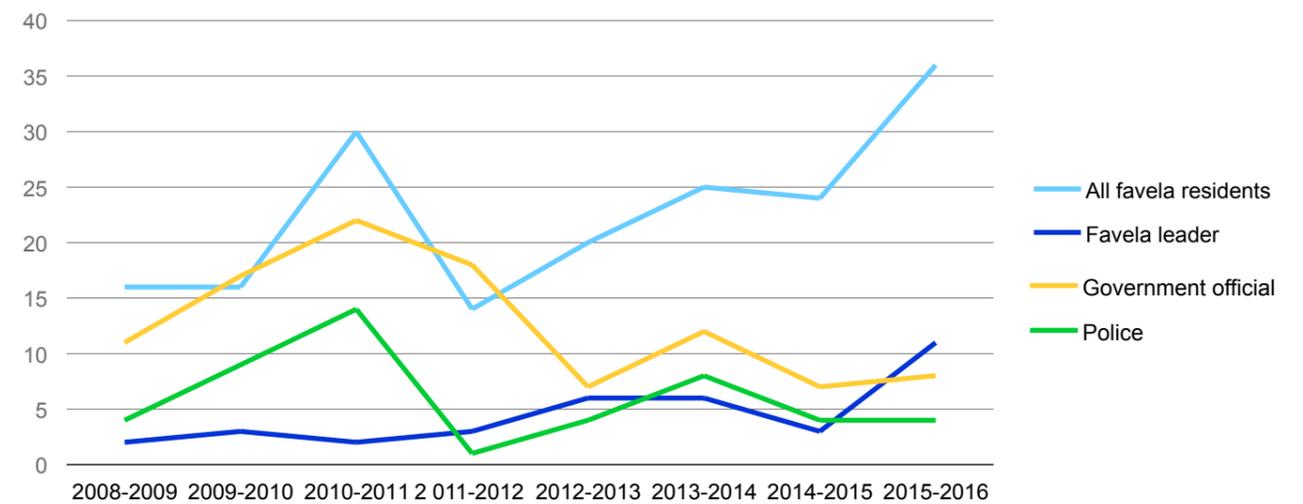
In the previous graph, "All favela residents" combines leaders, traffickers, community media and general favela residents into one category. Although "Favela leader" alone is a relatively rare source in each time period, the slow rise in articles that quote people clearly identified as leaders in the community is a positive trend, because community leaders, often elected by community members, are those residents who generally represent broad collective interests, have greater access to information, and are in regular direct communication with a large subset of residents, therefore providing keen thought-out insights into the community. Their role in the community also allows them to speak up more safely than other residents, and thus be more honest. Furthermore, the visibility of favela leadership counters stigmas that suggest favela residents are simply impoverished people who need aid from outsiders, rather than active change agents.

The graph below shows which sources were directly quoted most in each article over time. It shows that favela residents constitute the group quoted most frequently in each year except for the first 2008-2009 period.

Most quoted source type (by number of articles)

Legend:
- General favela resident
- Favela leader
- Government official
- Police
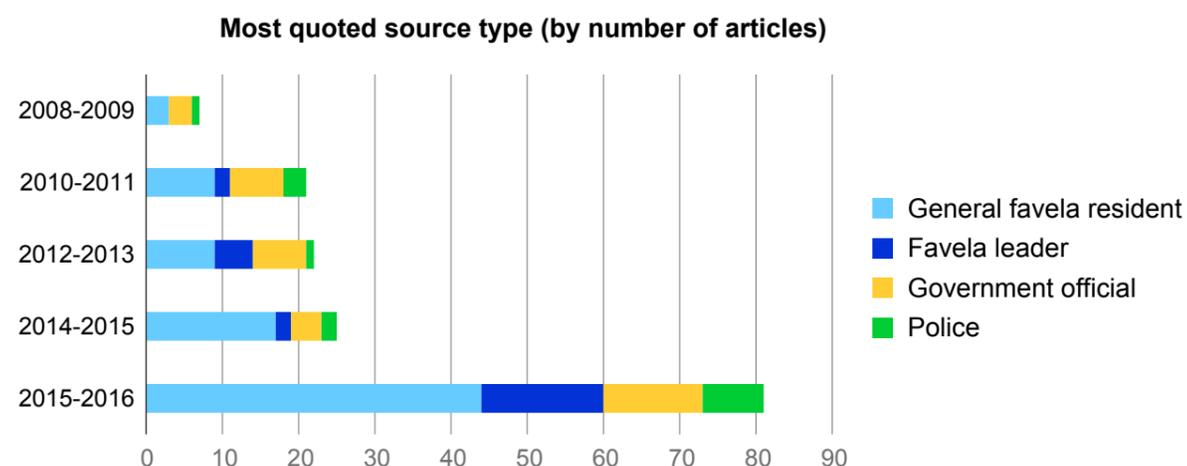
By outlet:

Each outlet mirrored the overall results in that favela residents were quoted in the highest number of articles compared with other groups. That said, *The Wall Street Journal* and *The Telegraph* were more prone to articles that gave more space (in words) to quotes from government officials and police than quotes from favela residents.

"Favela" is a challenging word to translate to English, and the concept of a favela and the diversity of communities called favelas is a hard one to accurately convey to international audiences who are unfamiliar with Rio's unique landscape. English-language articles often employ more familiar English words to translate or explain the word "favela," regardless of their accuracy or the stigma produced. Many more articles use alternative words throughout the article.

While tracking what words were employed to describe favelas, we identified any alternatives that were presented as a definition or translation of "favela," or used in the title, heading or first paragraph, as primary alternatives. For example, in the sentence—"Rio's favelas, or slums, have been historically neglected by the government"—"slum" is used to define and explain favela, so it is a primary alternative. We identified any other words that were used in place of "favela" as general alternatives. For example, as long as the sentence—"Rocinha is a slum near Rio's tourist beaches"—does not occur in the title, heading or first paragraph, "slum" would be a general alternative since it replaces favela without defining it.

The graph below shows, in red, the number of articles that used the following words in place of "favela" as general alternatives and, in blue, the number of articles that used each term as a primary alternative.

"Slum" is clearly the word used the most as a general alternative (in 38% of articles) and primary alternative (in 27% of articles). "Shantytown" is used in 197 articles and "community" is used in 194 (both roughly 18%), although "shantytown" is more frequently used as a primary alternative. **That said, over 450 articles (42%) do not use any translation or alternative for "favela."**

Number of articles using alternative words for "favela"

Area
Community
Complex
District
Ghetto
Hill
Informal settlement
Neighborhood
Shacks
Shantytown/shanties
Slum
Squatter settlement
Other
None

- General alternative
- Primary alternative
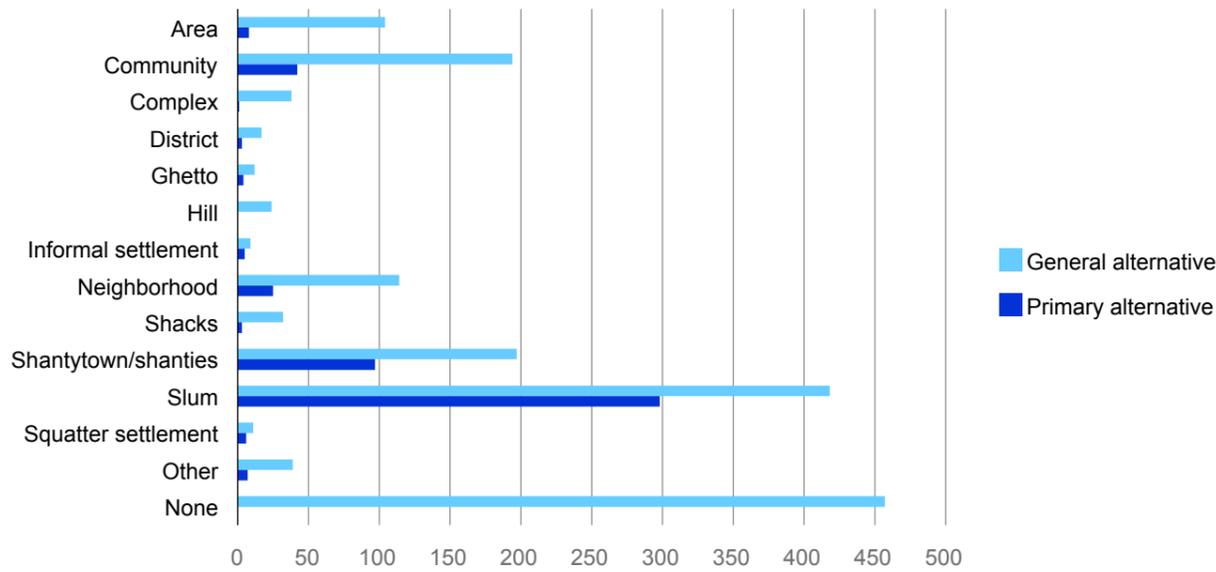
When we zoom in to articles in which favelas are a main subject, the graph below shows that the ratios of articles using each of the alternative words remains fairly similar to overall dataset. The main exception is that "community" is a more common general alternative relative to other words among articles where favelas are a main subject, than among overall articles.

Only 8% of articles in which favelas are a main subject do not use any alternative word at all, compared to the 42% of overall articles that don't use an alternative. This is intuitive since with more word space dedicated to favelas, it is more likely that journalists would seek to vary their language rather than just repeating "favela."

Number of articles using alternative words for "favela," where favelas are a main subject

Area
Community
Complex
District
Ghetto
Hill
Informal settlement
Neighborhood
Shacks
Shantytown/shanties
Slum
Squatter settlement
Other
None

- General alternative
- Primary alternative
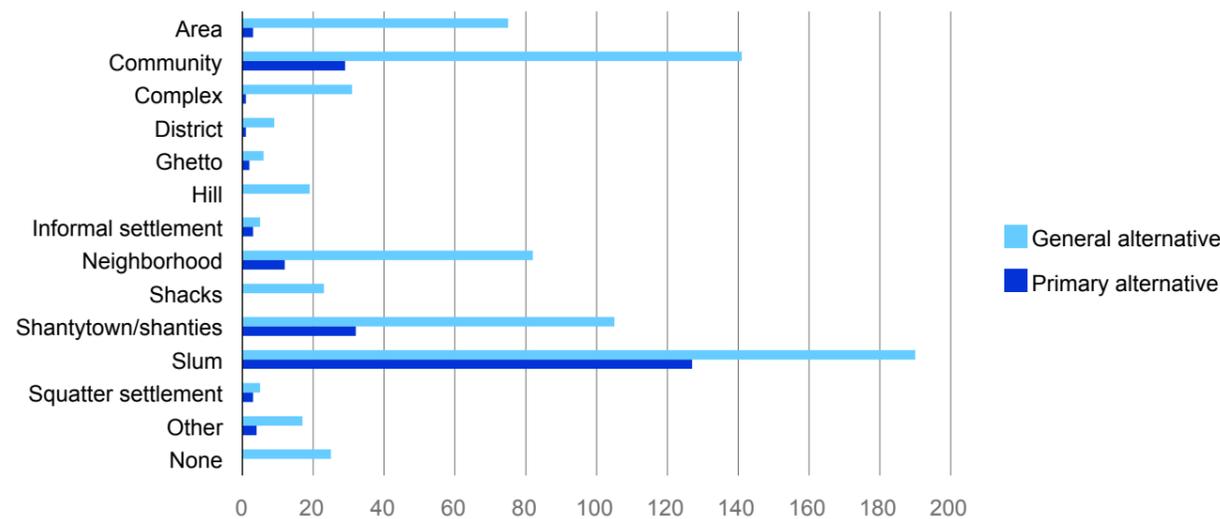
By year:

CatComm has been working to encourage English-language media to "call them favelas," instead of employing potentially misleading alternatives. In particular, CatComm worked to discourage the use of inaccurate and stigmatizing translations like "slum" and "shantytown" in place of "favela." The following chart examines each year for the percentages of articles that used no alternative at all, of articles that used general but no primary alternatives, and then of articles with negative primary alternatives (ie. slum, shantytown, ghetto, shacks) and of articles with neutral primary alternatives (ie. neighborhood, community, hill, area, district, settlement). The primary alternative is crucial because it is the most concise definition or explanation of a favela in a given article.

Articles with primary alternatives

2008-2009
2009-2010
2010-2011
2011-2012
2012-2013
2013-2014
2014-2015
2015-2016

- No alternative
- Alternative but no primary
- Negative primary alternative
- Neutral primary alternative
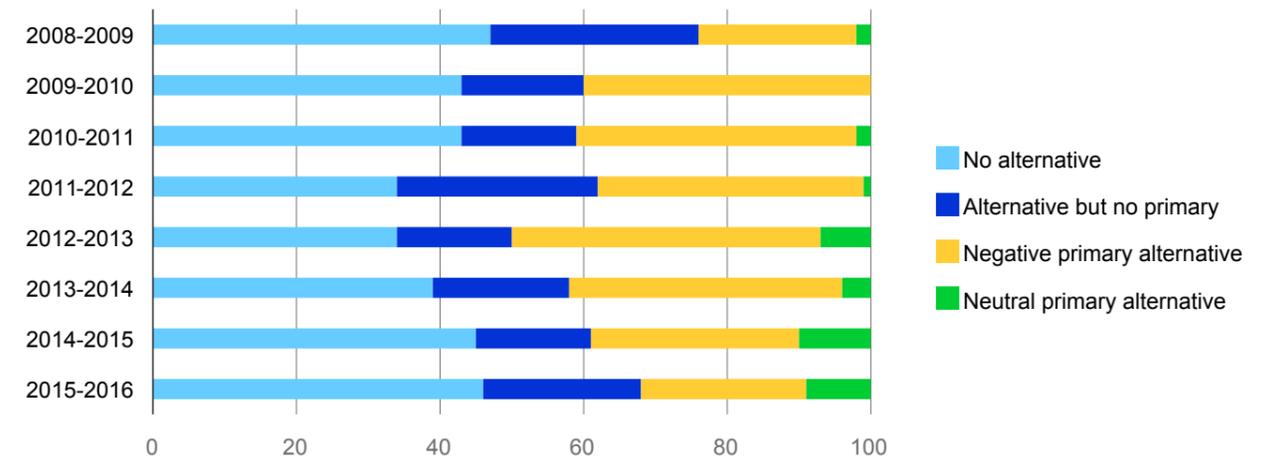
Negative primary alternatives were found in just 22% of articles in the year before the Olympics were awarded to Rio, but jumped up to 40% of articles the next year before slowly declining again over the years to 23% in 2015-2016. Overall, neutral primary alternatives increase in prevalence over the years, which is a positive sign.

Within the overall growth of neutral primary alternatives, the percentages of article with neutral primary alternatives declined in each of the two mega-event years compared to the years directly before. Although we don't have the data to investigate this more thoroughly, we suspect this reflects the impact of "parachute journalists"—international journalists who came to Rio to report on the city for short stints due to the World Cup or the Olympics, and who were naturally less familiar with the city's complexities than Rio-based correspondents. In other words, **there may be a trend over time towards more nuanced language among Rio-based correspondents which was disrupted by the arrival of so many new journalists in the months directly ahead of and during each mega-event.** Data on favela language in the 2016-2017 period could shed further light on this question.

Since "slum," "shantytown" (or "shanties"), "community," and "neighborhood" stood out as the most commonly used words for "favela," we explore their individual usage over time as well.

% of articles: COMMUNITY	OVERALL	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016
Alternative	18%	4%	6%	13%	16%	15%	22%	18%	21%
Primary Alternative	2%	0%	0%	1%	0%	3%	1%	5%	3%

% of articles: NEIGHBORHOOD	OVERALL	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016
Alternative	10%	4%	5%	10%	8%	7%	13%	8%	14%
Primary Alternative	2%	2%	0%	1%	0%	0%	1%	2%	3%

% of articles: SHANTYTOWN	OVERALL	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016
Alternative	17%	22%	19%	33%	18%	27%	14%	8%	14%
Primary Alternative	8%	7%	9%	11%	6%	15%	8%	1%	7%

% of articles: SLUM	OVERALL	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016
Alternative	38%	36%	47%	48%	51%	40%	40%	36%	29%
Primary Alternative	23%	16%	27%	27%	28%	28%	28%	25%	15%

By outlet:

Some outlets, or at least some editors, adopted standardized translations of favelas that were used consistently across several articles in a particular time period. By 2016 The *Wall Street Journal* began using "working-class neighborhoods, known locally as favelas," or similar descriptive variations. This turn towards a more wordy but descriptive explanation was also employed by *New York Times* correspondent Simon Romero. Prior to May 2015 most of his articles translated favela as "slum," but following a CatComm press event related to challenging favela stigma through media he asked his Twitter followers for suggestions for more nuanced terms. The next article published with his byline described Complexo do Alemão's specific features, rather than using a single-word favela translation.

On the other hand, some outlets that adopted a single regular translation ended up with blatant inaccuracies. Many *AP* articles describe Rio's favelas as "hillside slums." While the usefulness of "slum" is perhaps open to some debate, certainly not all of Rio's favelas are "hillside." Yet "hillside slum" became such a default description that it was used to describe a favela next to the Athletes' Village, even though favelas near the Athletes' Village are in lowlying areas. Specificity and accuracy have been compromised for the sake of trying to simplify the concept.

The graphs below show the percentage of articles within each outlet which, in the first row, used the given alternative word, and in the second row, used the given word as a primary alternative.

Al Jazeera and *The Wall Street Journal* stand out for using "community" most regularly.

% of articles: COMMUNITY	OVERALL	NYT	WSJ	USAT	GUAR	TELE	DM	AP	AJ
Alternative	18%	11%	31%	17%	20%	13%	16%	16%	38%
Primary Alternative	2%	0%	6%	10%	4%	2%	1%	1%	0%

Community was not a common primary alternative but most prevalent in *USA Today*.

% of articles: NEIGHBORHOOD	OVERALL	NYT	WSJ	USAT	GUAR	TELE	DM	AP	AJ
Alternative	10%	11%	32%	14%	8%	5%	7%	9%	18%
Primary Alternative	2%	1%	12%	0%	1%	1%	2%	0%	0%

Neighborhood was even less common than "community" as a primary alternative, but did feature in 12% of *Wall Street Journal* articles once the outlet adopted the "working-class neighborhoods" default explanation for favela. The term featured in nearly a third of *WSJ* articles.

| % of articles: SHANTYTOWN	OVERALL	NYT	WSJ	USAT	GUAR	TELE	DM	AP	AJ
Alternative	17% 8	%	17%	17%	14%	13%	33%	30%	21%
Primary Alternative	8% 3	%	8%	10% 4	%	8%	21% 9	%	9%

"Shantytown" was most regular in *Daily Mail* and *AP* articles, serving as a primary alternative for favela in over one-fifth of *Daily Mail* articles.

% of articles: SLUM	OVERALL	NYT	WSJ	USAT	GUAR	TELE	DM	AP	AJ
Alternative	38%	43%	44%	38%	22%	21%	45%	82%	44%
Primary Alternative	23%	30%	34%	24%	8%	11%	19%	67%	29%

"Slum" comes in at overall higher percentages than the other alternative words in almost all outlets. In particular, it features in more than 4 of every 5 *AP* articles and is used as a primary alternative in more than two-thirds of *AP* articles—thanks in part to the default "hillside slums" language. It's the primary alternative in one-third of *Wall Street Journal* articles.

By coding all articles for mentions of certain topics, we can see which issues related to favelas get more or less attention. We coded for topics that either emerged out of the initial coding phase, or were topics of particular interest to CatComm—notably "Favela qualities," "Favela culture," "Community media"—that we wanted to track. Articles could be coded for multiple "Topics," but only one "Main topic."

Focusing on articles in which favelas were the main subject, **"violence or drugs" is the most commonly mentioned topic, with "police" and "pacification" as the second and third most commonly mentioned topics.**

Topics - Articles with favelas as main subject
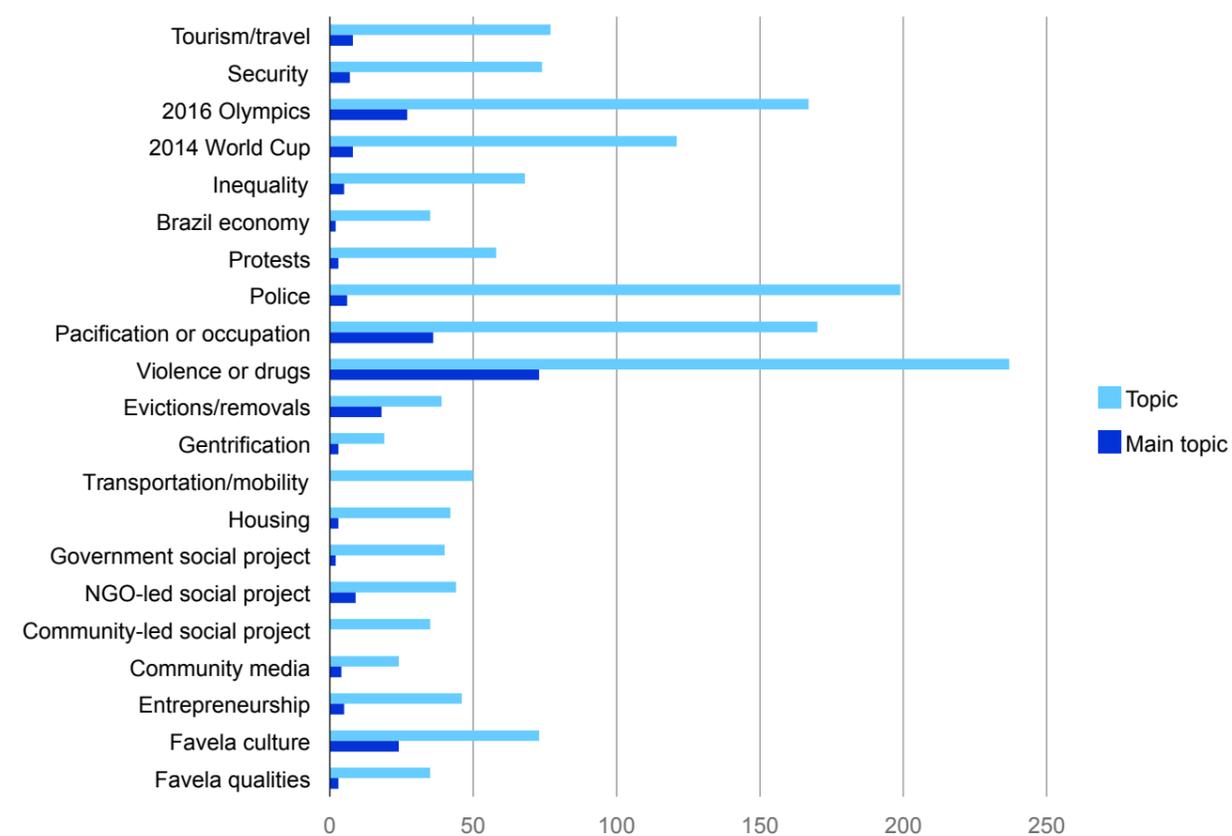
Topic / Main topic

"Violence or drugs" and "pacification or occupation" were the most common main topics, followed by "2016 Olympics," "Favela culture," and "Evictions/removals."

In Phase 2 of research, we also coded for five additional topics we felt were missing from phase 1: militias, human rights, politics, race, gender. Adding these topics to the data, but only for the articles coded in Phase 2, produces the following results:

Topics - Phase 2 data
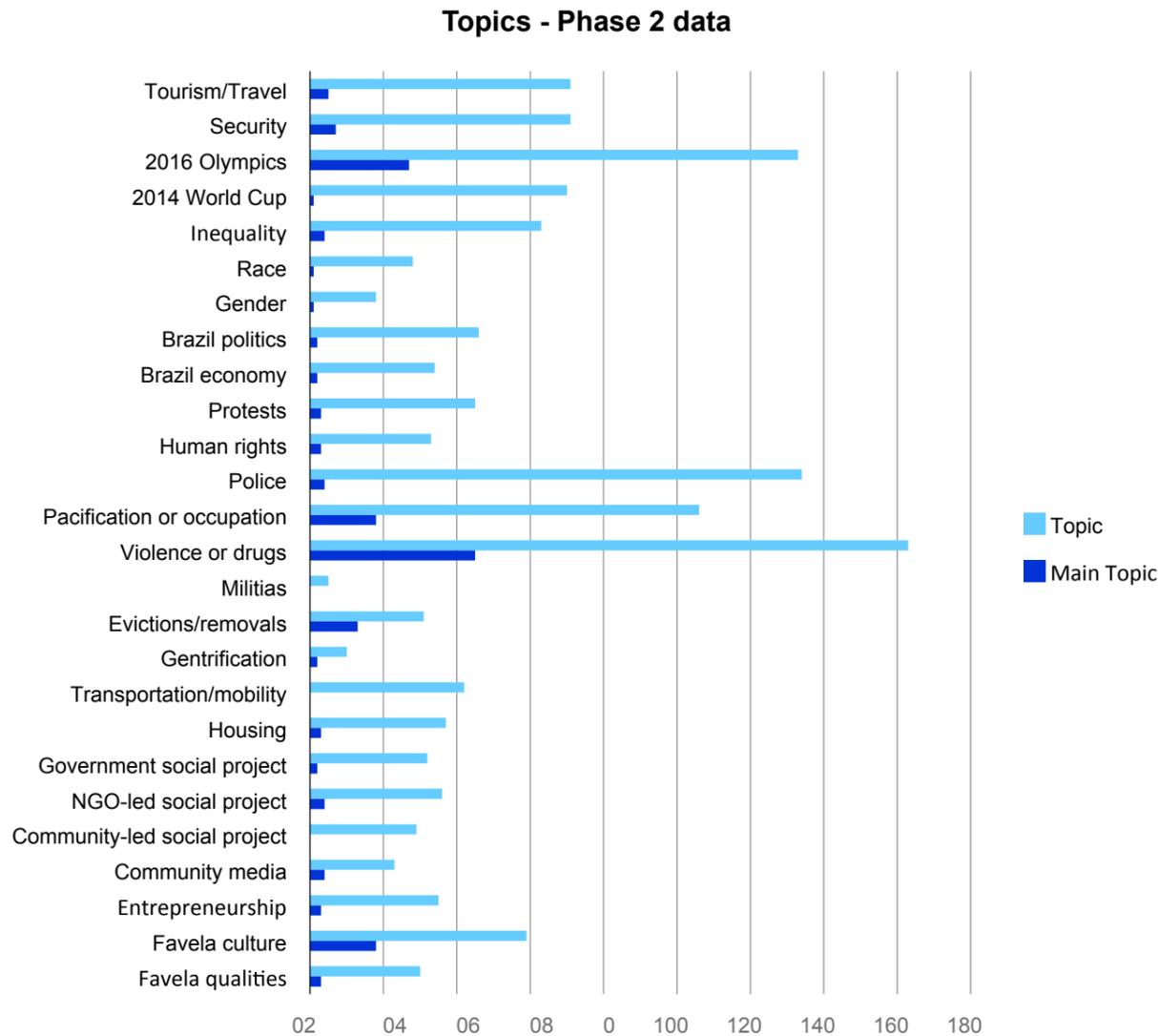
The most prevalent topics and main topics remain similar in this partial dataset.

By year:

Of articles in which favelas are a main subject, **a smaller percentage of articles have "violence or drugs" as a main topic in the later years than in the early years,** even as the absolute number has increased with the rising number of articles about favelas. In the

2009-2010 period, 50% (10) of the articles with favelas as a main subject focused on "violence or drugs." In the most recent periods covering October 2013 to August 2016, between 20 and 27% of articles each year had "violence or drugs" as a main topic. Interestingly, this percentage dropped to its lowest point in the 2012-2013 year, which is arguably when public perceptions of the pacification program were at their best.

Still focusing on articles in which favelas are the main subject, the following graph examines how relatively often five diverse selected topics were mentioned by year. The selected topics are: "violence or drugs," "pacification or occupation," "evictions/removals," "favela culture," and "community media."

Percentage of articles mentioning topics over time
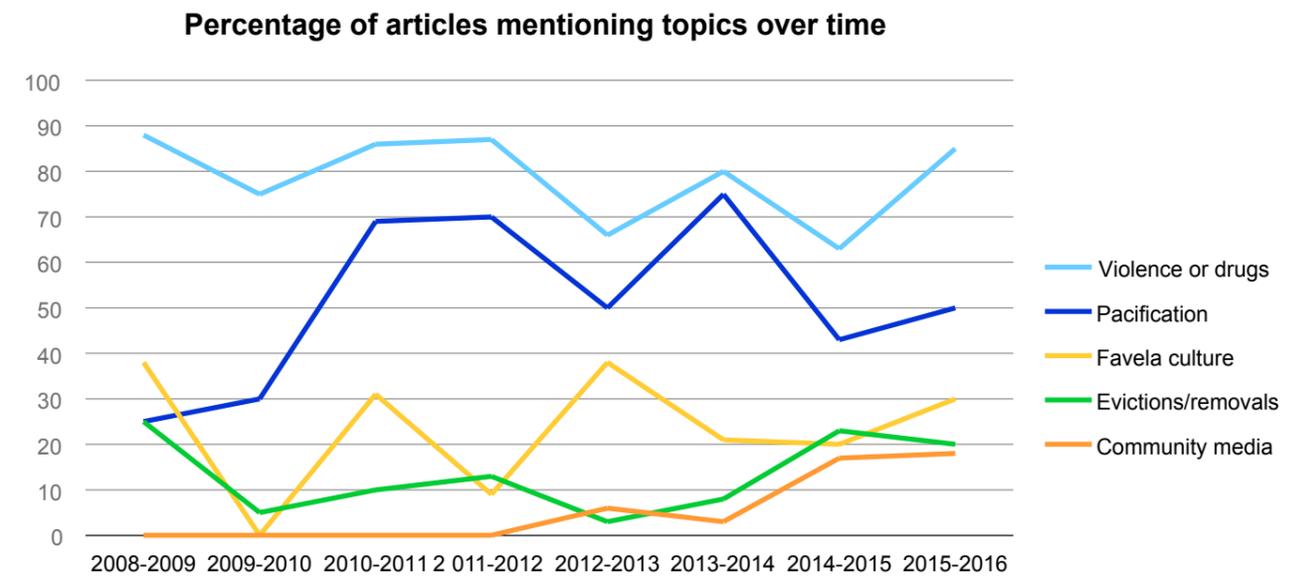
The percentage for "violence or drugs" as a mentioned topic hit a low of 63% in 2014-2015, even though violence was on the uptick that year. That percentage peaked at 88% in 2008-2009, but was second highest at 85% in 2015-2016, with **no clear sign of violence decreasing as a mentioned topic over time.** It would be interesting to measure the trend in continuing years, as it's possible the percentages are decreasing over time overall and simply spiking back up in the World Cup and the Olympics years. "Pacification or occupation" roughly followed the trajectory of "violence or drugs" over the years, albeit with a high point in 2013-2014, before the pacification program was hit by financial crisis.

"Community media" featured in zero or one of these outlets' articles about favelas until growing as a topic in 2012; it was mentioned in 19 articles (6%) in 2015-2016. Likewise, "community-led social projects" peaked in the 2015-2016 year. **The slow growth of these topics over the years could reflect growing space for positive stories about favelas.**

"Evictions/removals" and "favela culture" had more ambiguous trajectories over the years.

Other topics that received more attention in the 2015-2016 period included Brazil's economy and political situation, as would be expected given the increasing concerns about the country's finances and the impeachment process. Protests and inequality featured in the largest percentages of articles in the 2012-2013 year, which makes sense given the Brazil-wide protests that took place in July 2013.

Perpetrators of violence:

Partway through our research, we began to hypothesize that although violence remained a regular topic in articles about favelas, there was an ongoing shift towards a more nuanced discussion of violence. Whereas articles from the early periods we studied generally only mentioned violence of drug traffickers or an inherent labeling of favelas as "violent" places, articles in the later periods seemed more likely to also highlight the violence of the state or police.

Overall, in a subset of 277 articles that mentioned violence in the context of favelas, 40% (112) of articles suggested residents of favelas (including but not always referring to traffickers) were the violent actors, 16% (43) portrayed only the police or military as violent actors, and 44% (122) portrayed both residents and police/military as violent. Although there is no clear trend in the percentages of articles that portray only residents as violent, or articles that portray both police and residents as violent, **there is an overall increase in articles that portray only police as violent.** In the 2008-2009 and 2010-2011 periods, only one article in each year focused on police violence. In comparison, in the 2012-2013 period, there were 6 such articles, in 2014-2015 there were 8, and by 2015-2016 there were 25. **This demonstrates increasing attention to Rio and Brazil's immensely high police killing rates as a newsworthy story in itself.**

By outlet:

The following chart lists the topics that were mentioned most and second most in each outlet. *USA Today* is the only outlet in which violence or drugs was not one of the two most mentioned topics.

Outlet	Most frequent topic (#)	Second most frequent topic (#)
New York Times	Violence / drugs (77)	Olympics (64)
Wall Street Journal	Violence / drugs (47)	Olympics (44)
USA Today	Olympics (23)	Tourism / travel (14)
Guardian	Violence / drugs (161)	Police (127)
Telegraph	Violence / drugs (73)	Olympics (63)
Daily Mail	Violence / drugs (68)	Olympics (59)
AP	Olympics (92)	Violence / drugs (78)
Al Jazeera	Violence / drugs (26)	Police (23)

Below, a word cloud from each outlet shows the most commonly used words in each outlet's article titles. The outlets with fewer articles with favelas also have smaller word clouds, and they tend to include basic words that match the focus of topics on violence and the Olympics. The outlets with more articles and larger word clouds have more diverse words in the titles, as they explore more varied topics.

New York Times

Wall Street Journal

USA Today
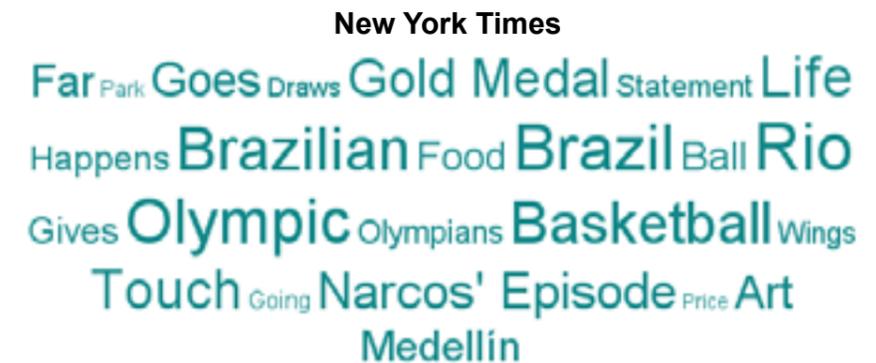
The Guardian

England Rugby Film Festival Politics Street Artist
Gangs Human Rights Brazilian Latin America
Rio de Janeiro Global Brazil Football
Olympics Obama Favelas
Opening Ceremony Review Fun and Games
Pope Francis Oscar Women Missed Urban
Wrong London

The Telegraph

Manchester City Life Artist Ceremony Street British
Review Kemp Rio Favela DVD Brazil
Pope Francis Olympics Exclusive
Police Milan Rio de Janeiro London
Brazilian Generation World Cup Turn
Copacabana Beach

Daily Mail

Philippe Coutinho Carnival Samba Society Football
Magic Inside Double Rio de Janeiro Media
Favela Adriano
MailOnline on Twitter Britain
Games Hard Usain Bolt Sailing
Shot Dead Ticket Iconic Golden Girl

AP

Million Soccer Rio Games Flag Pope Museum
Brazilian Athletes Brazil WCup
Olympics Rio Mayor Rio Slum Drug
World Cup Nixes Rio Favela Rio Security

Al Jazeera

World Cup Slum Rio Olympic Games Brazil
Violence Police

Topic by favela:

If we look at what topics were mentioned alongside particular favelas, we can see that violence/drugs was the most frequent topic (or tied for the most frequent topic) for the five most often mentioned favelas. Vila Autódromo is one of the few favelas in the full dataset for which violence/drugs is not one of the top four most frequent topics.

|	Most frequent topic (#)	Second most frequent topic (#)	Third most frequent topic (#)	Fourth most frequent topic (#)
Rocinha	Violence/drugs (86)	Pacification (78)	Police (78)	World Cup (71)
Alemão	Police, Violence/drugs (73)	n/a	Pacification (60)	Olympics (58)
Maré	Violence/drugs (65)	Police (59)	Olympics (45)	Pacification (40)
City of God	Violence/drugs (38)	Olympics (35)	Police (23)	Security (17)
Vidigal	Pacification, Violence/drugs (25)	n/a	Police (22)	Olympics (14)
Vila Autódromo	Olympics (39)	Evictions/ removals (36)	Transportation/ mobility infrastructure (21)	World Cup (21)

06. Portrayal

COMMON ATTRIBUTES

Based on initial coding of a sample of articles, we compiled a list of favela attributes that featured frequently in English mainstream news. These attributes ranged from clearly positive to clearly negative but with a large number of neutral or ambiguous attributes in between; to minimize biased and unreliable interpretation, we chose not to assign value judgments to the attributes, but instead code them simply as mentions.

We only coded an article as including one of the following attributes if that attribute was explicitly mentioned or demonstrated. For example, a description of ramshackle homes would be coded for "Favelas are made of poor quality, rickety buildings," but not for "Favela residents are financially poor," even though the latter is implied.

The following graph tracks the number of articles that featured each attribute, with negative attributes listed first, followed by positive attributes. **"Sites of violence" and "sites of drugs/ gangs" clearly stood out as the most commonly portrayed attributes of favelas. These two attributes each featured in over 350 articles. The most common positive attribute was that favelas are a "source of culture," which featured in 133 articles.** Most of these articles referred to the music and dance traditions that have emerged from favelas (including passinho, funk and baile funks, and samba).
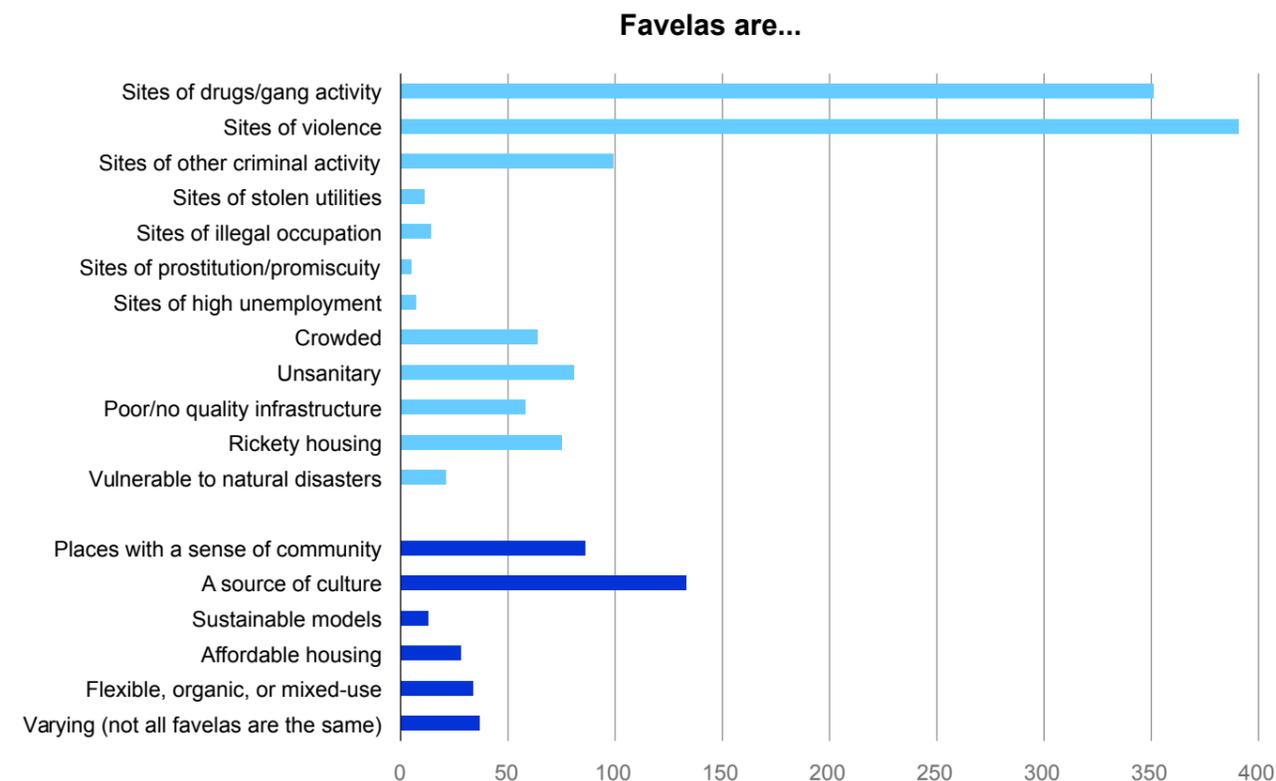
Favelas are...

The most common trait ascribed to favela residents was "financially poor." We were happy to find that residents were more commonly portrayed as "active agents of change" and "entrepreneurial" than as "unhappy, desperate or miserable." For "active agents of change" we coded articles that featured residents working to improve their community or city, whether through social projects, the local neighborhood association, protests and activism; this attribute was featured in more than 150 articles.

Favela residents are...
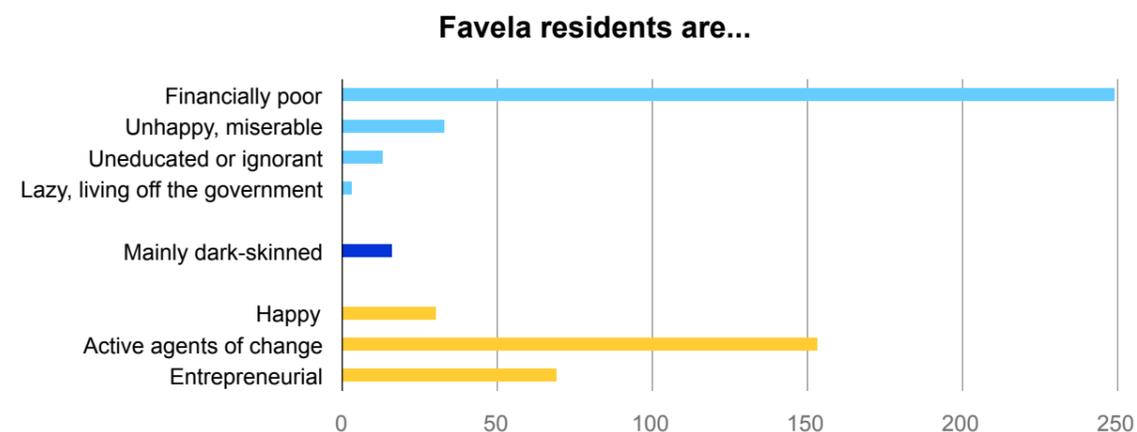
By year:

**In both the World Cup year and Olympics year, the percentage of articles that portray favelas as sites of drugs/gang activity and sites of violence spiked in comparison to the years directly before.** In fact, the 2015-2016 year had the highest percentage of articles (42%) portraying favelas as sites of violence in the studied period. This could partially reflect the increasing violence rates around the city, but that would mean we should expect 2014-2015 period to have had a higher percentage than the 2013-2014 period. Instead, **the peaks in the World Cup and Olympics year may reflect an overall increased media concern with security issues around the events themselves, and the influx of more journalists looking to write on violence in favelas.**

Over the years, there was a general decline in the percentage of articles that portrayed favela housing as rickety, but an increase in the percentage portraying favelas as unsanitary, which may reflect a rising level of attention paid to sanitation as a major issue in Rio. **There was also a positive gradual increase in the percentage of articles that explicitly portrayed favelas as having a strong sense of community.** Most other topics do not show clear trends.

Favelas are...

- Sites of violence
- A source of culture
- Unsanitary
- Rickety housing
- Sites of high unemployment
- Vulnerable to natural disasters
- Sites of stolen utilities
- Varying (not all favelas are the same)
- Affordable housing
- Sites of drugs/gang activity
- Places with a sense of community
- Sites of other criminal activity
- Crowded
- Sites of illegal occupation
- Sustainable models
- Flexible, organic, or mixed-use
- Sites of prostitution/promiscuity

The percentage of articles portraying favela residents as "active agents of change" increased over the years, along with a slow increase in articles portraying residents as entrepreneurial. Unlike the spikes in the World Cup and Olympic years in portrayals of favelas as sites of violence and drug/gang activity, the mega-event years had lower percentages of articles portraying favela residents as financially poor.

Favela residents are...

- Financially poor
- Active agents of change
- Entrepreneurial
- Happy
- Unhappy, desperate, miserable
- Predominately black or dark-skinned
- Uneducated or ignorant
- Lazy, living off the government
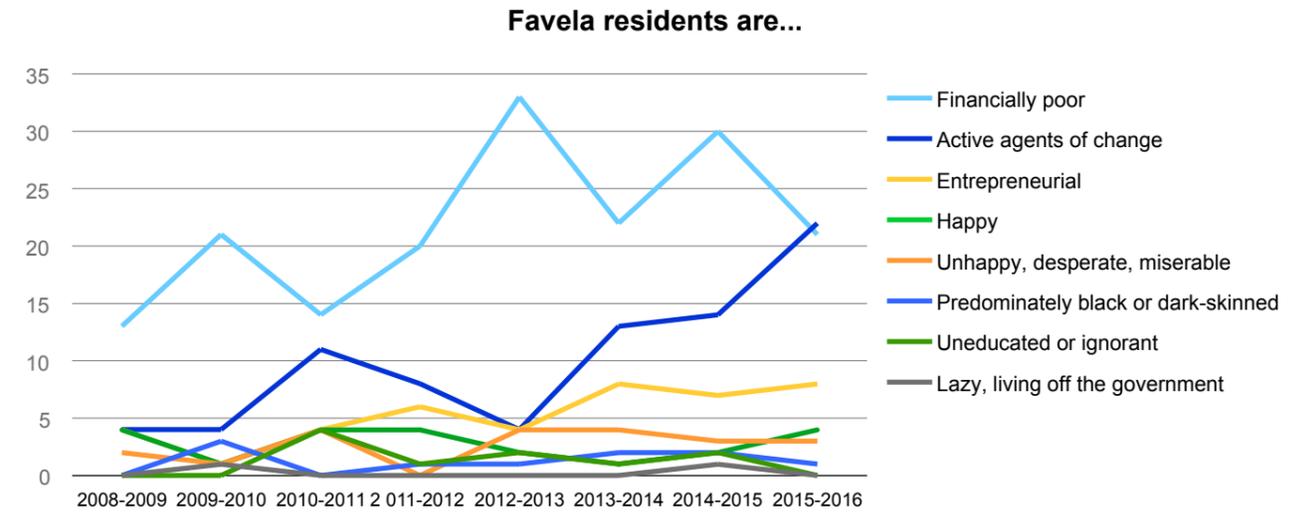
OVERALL IMPRESSION

The coders labeled every article by the overall impression it gave of Rio's favelas. In the case of articles coded in the second phase of our research, two coders had to agree on each response. To minimize consistency, coders asked themselves: "If this article were the first time a reader heard of Rio's favelas, what overriding impression would the reader have of favelas after reading the article?" All articles that included both positive and negative elements of favelas, or where the researcher felt the answer could be ambiguous, were labeled as "neutral." Caution should be used when drawing conclusions from these numbers—the "neutral" category includes articles that could arguably be interpreted as positive or negative.

For the full period studied, **nearly 46% of articles gave overwhelmingly negative portrayals of favelas, which corresponds with the high numbers of articles focused on violence and drug/gang activity in these communities. A slightly smaller percentage (44%) were neutral, while only 7% were overwhelmingly positive about favelas. About 4% of articles suggested that pacification made favelas better places.**

Overall impression
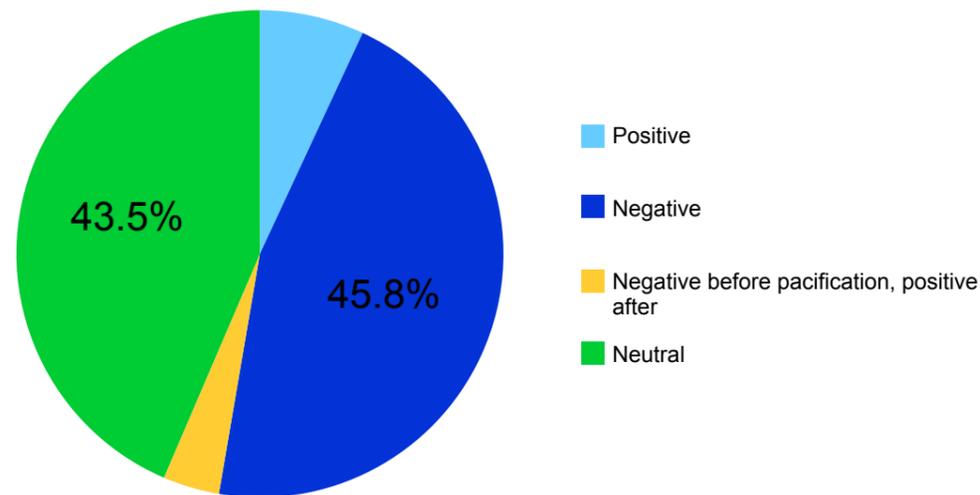

By Year:

Overall impression by year
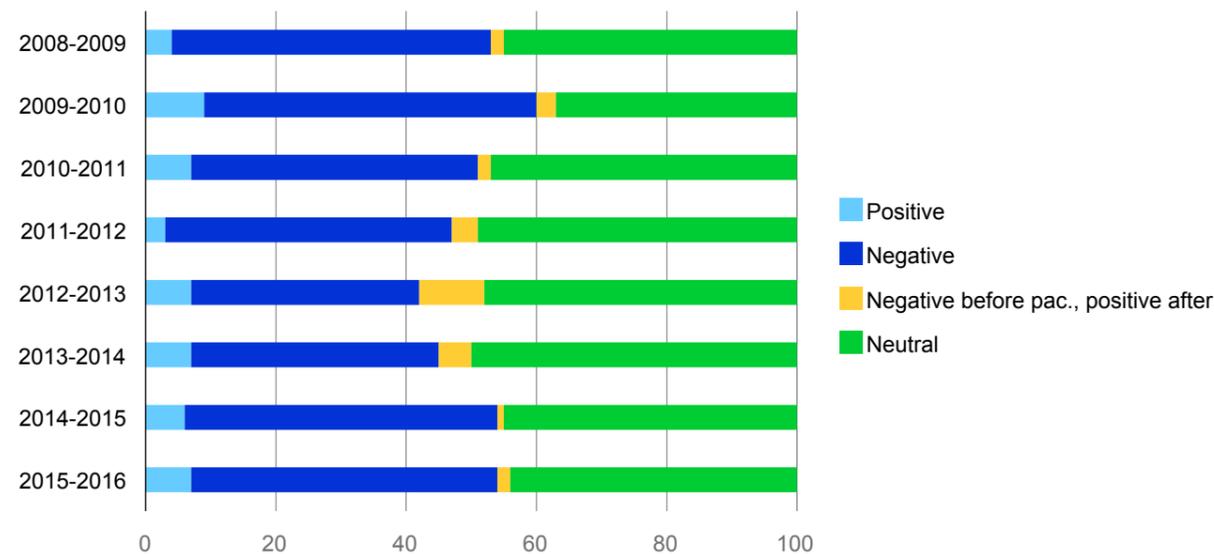
While the percentages of the four categories remain roughly similar over the studied period, it is interesting that **the largest percentage of articles suggesting pacification changed favelas for the better came in 2012-2013, when public perception about the state security program was still relatively high;** despite serious blows to trust in police such as the disappearance of Amarildo in Rocinha in July 2013, the installation of UPPs in high visibility trafficking strongholds like Complexo do Alemão over the course of 2012 gave some impression that the program could succeed. The percentage of articles with this optimism decreased again after 2013.

Our data collection doesn't distinguish between those articles that leave a negative impression of favelas while also offering a nuanced look (such as this _New York Times_ article on police violence) and those articles that left a negative impression of favelas through intensive stigmatization and sloppy assumption-driven reflections. It is undeniable though that examples of the most stigmatizing articles did continue to be published through 2016 and the Olympics. This _AP article_, which was republished in the _Daily Mail_ on July 22, 2016 as well as in other outlets, is an example of some of the worst sensationalist reporting that leaves the reader with the impression favelas are pockets of hell with no redeeming qualities.

By outlet:

Overall impression by outlet
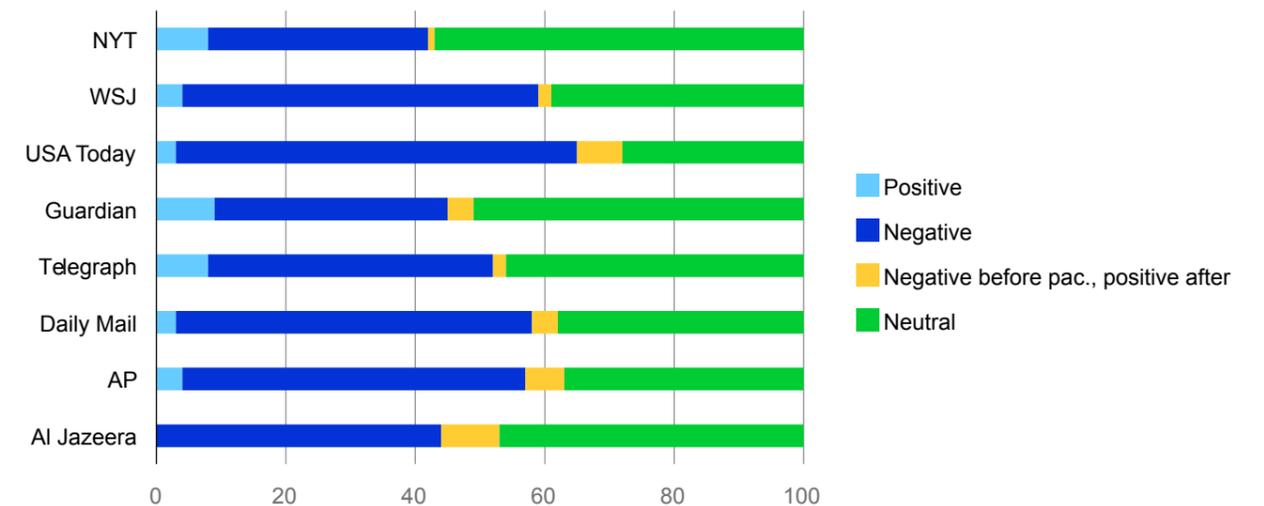
The Guardian (9%), _The Telegraph_ (8%), and _The New York Times_ (8%) had the highest percentages of articles that gave overwhelmingly positive impressions of favelas. More than 50% of articles in _USA Today_ (62%), _The Wall Street Journal_ (55%), the _Daily Mail_ (55%) and _AP_ (53%) portrayed favelas negatively, compared to just 34% of _New York Times_ articles and 36% of _Guardian_ articles. _Al Jazeera_ had zero articles that gave an overwhelmingly positive impression of favelas, which does not meant the outlet never discussed positive attributes of favelas, but rather that each article also discussed something negative; an excellent _Al Jazeera article_ on community media and the initiative of favela journalists, for example, would have been coded as neutral due to its coverage of violence in favelas.

A picture may be worth a thousand words, but only 303 (28%) of the articles featured a photo a favela. Where favelas were the main or a secondary subject, 276 (47%) of the 592 articles featured a photo of a favela.

Of the 303 articles with favela photos, 61 articles did not identify the photographed favela by name, while 41 included a photo of a named favela that was not discussed in the article.

From the 765 articles coded in Phase 2 research, 43 (6%) were accompanied by videos featuring favelas.

By year:

There is not a clear consistent trend over the years but the lowest percentage of articles with favela photos occurred in the earliest studied year (2008-2009: 16%) and the greatest percentages of articles with a favela photo occurred in the Olympic year (2015-2016: 38%). The 2015-2016 Olympic year had the highest percentage of articles with videos featuring a favela (8%), but there was also not a clear trend of a rising usage of video over the years.

By outlet:

Al Jazeera was the only outlet that included a favela photo in more than half of all articles. *AP* was the least likely to include a favela photo, as 80% of its articles had no favela photo at all. *USA Today* had the highest percentage of articles with videos of favelas, at 23%, while *AP* had the smallest percentage at less than 1%.

The majority of articles about favelas were either news stories covering a specific incident or "Feature articles," which explored a topic or phenomenon more in-depth.

Type of article

- Feature article
- News report
- Op-ed
- Review
- Other
- Favela resident contribution
- Editorial
- Letter to the editor
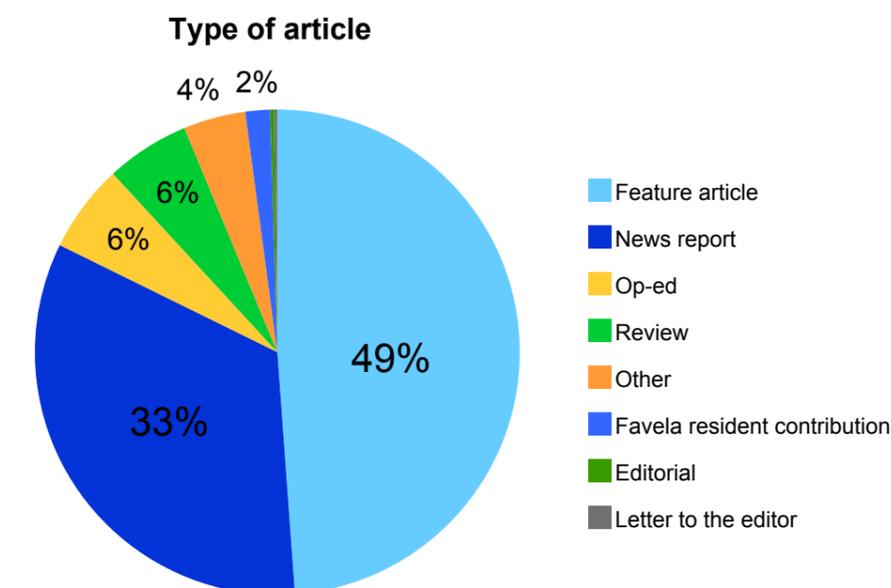
Seventeen articles were written or co-written by favela residents. In 2012 Providência's Mauricio Hora co-wrote an op-ed in *The New York Times* with CatComm's Theresa Williamson. This was the only article in the studied time period by a favela resident until the *Guardian* began its innovative series, "Rio Olympics: view from the favelas," which featured three community journalists from Rocinha, Maré, and Alemão who each contributed five diary-entry style articles over the course of the year from August 2015 to August 2016. We'll zoom in on these articles as compared to the larger dataset later.

Compared to centrality overall, **the percentage of articles that mentioned favelas only once decreased substantially during the Olympic month, from 46 to 30%.** There was not much change in the percentage of articles in which favelas were a main subject, so the main increase came in the category of articles in which favelas were a secondary subject, which grew from 27 to 44%.

Centrality (of 156 articles)

- Main subject
- Secondary subject
- Mentioned once

26.3%
44.2%
29.5%

Favela specificity

25%
22.4%
52.6%

- Favelas in general
- Unnamed favela
- Named favela
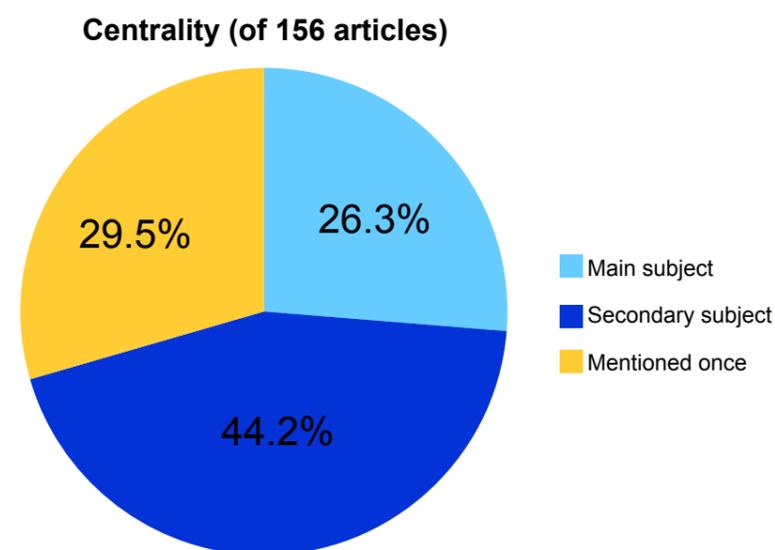
"Olympics" was the main subject of 78 articles (50%), with "violence or drugs" and "security" the main subject for 10% and 9% of articles respectively. For the overall dataset, "security" was not a frequent main subject.

Just 3 of 156 articles did not mention the Olympics, which further emphasizes how thoroughly the mega-event dominated August's media coverage. The next most common topics were "violence or drugs" (mentioned in 65% of articles), "police" (51%), "tourism/ travel" (48%), and "security" (40%). This is an unusually high position for "tourism/travel," while **"security" in a general city-wide sense overtook discussion of "pacification" specifically.**

In a substantial shift from the overall data, **favela specificity was much higher during the Olympic month.** 53% of articles in August 2016 named at least one specific favela, up from 49% of articles overall. 22% of August articles discussed a specific favela without naming it (up from 10% overall), while only 25% referred to favelas in general (down from 42% overall).
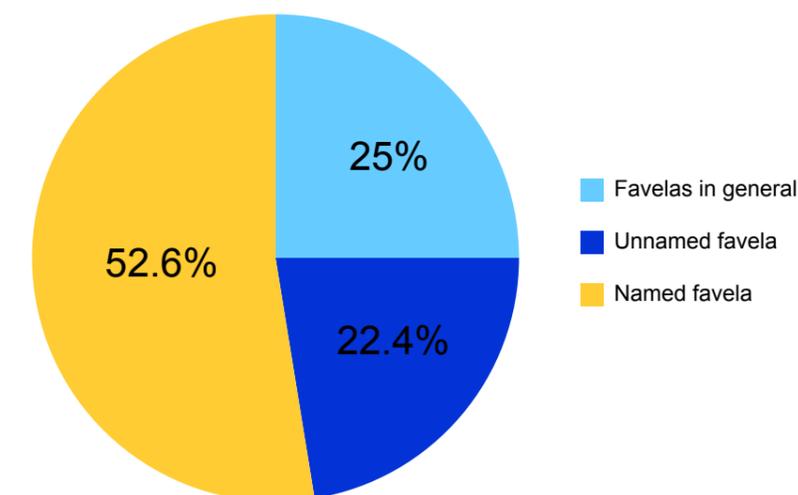
The most frequently mentioned favelas were City of God (in 14% of articles) followed by Complexo da Maré and Complexo do Alemão (each 13%). Maré and Alemão were mentioned most over the course of the 2015-2016 period, so City of God was mentioned disproportionately highly during the Games themselves, largely because of Rafaela Silva's success. The North Zone was still featured in more articles (31%) than any other of Rio's zones.

The group most commonly quoted about favelas in August 2016 were "other favela residents" (in 26% of articles) and "favela leaders" (14%). **For quotes from "other favela residents," 26% is higher than the average for 2015-2016 (21%), while 14% of articles marks a record for how often "favela leaders" were quoted. This suggests the Olympic month truly did offer unprecedented space—both in absolute and relative terms—for favela voices to be heard.**

43% of articles in August 2016 used no alternative word for "favela" (similar to 42% of the overall dataset). The most common alternatives were "slum" (29%), "community" (23%), and "area" (17%), but "slum" and "shantytown" were used more than other terms as primary alternatives, in 15% and 7% of articles, respectively.

Like the overall dataset, "sites of violence" and "sites of drug/gang activity" are the most frequent attributes used to describe favelas, while "financially poor" and "active agents of change" are the most frequent attributes used to describe favela residents.

Of the 17 articles written or co-written by favela residents, one was an op-ed in *The New York Times* in 2012, by CatComm's Theresa Williamson and Providência resident Maurício Hora, and the other 16 were part of the *Guardian*'s "View from the favelas" series, written between August 2015 and August 2016. **100% of articles covered "violence or drugs" and "pacification" and "police" were the next most regular topics, but the graph below shows several other topics were mentioned in more than 50% of articles, which suggests this set of articles by favela residents covers more diverse topics than the average article in the overall dataset.** "Olympics," "favela culture," "transportation/mobility infrastructure," "inequality," "protests," "favela qualities," and "tourism/travel" were all mentioned in more than half the articles. This data suggests favela journalists are as or more likely than regular journalists to tackle the negative issues facing their communities, but much more likely to discuss positive aspects too.

Mentioned topics

| Topic	Value
Tourism or travel	8
Security	7
2016 Olympics	14
2014 World Cup	5
Inequality	11
Brazil economy	5
Protests	10
Police	15
Pacification or occupation	16
Violence or drugs	17
Evictions/removals	5
Gentrification	1
Transportation/mobility	11
Housing	2
Government social project	5
NGO-led social project	7
Community-led social project	5
Entrepreneurship	6
Favela culture	11
Favela qualities	8

When discussing violence in favelas, articles by favela residents either showed both residents and the police as perpetrators of violence, or only the police; **none suggested violence was only perpetrated by residents.** This is a stark datapoint given 40% of articles that mentioned violence in the full dataset only portrayed residents as violent.

All 17 articles mentioned a specific favela by name. In addition to the home communities of the authors (Providência, Rocinha, Alemão, and Maré), the favela journalists also discussed Caju, Favelo do Metrô, City of God, Vila Autódromo, Manguinhos, Mangueira, and Chácara do Céu. The three correspondents for the Guardian series frequently referred to each other's communities despite a clear mandate to focus on their own.

The favela journalists never directly quoted police or government officials, although they did reference them indirectly about as often as they referenced other favela residents. Instead, these articles featured quotes from other favela residents, community media sources (which were rarely quoted directly elsewhere in the full dataset), and other media sources.

All 17 articles use "community" as an alternative for "favela," with "neighborhood" appearing as the second-most common alternative in 10 articles. None of these articles use "shantytown," and just one article in the *Guardian* series uses "slum." Across the full dataset, the *Guardian* used "slum" and "shantytown" in 22% and 14% of articles respectively, so the almost complete absence of these words from the small favela journalist dataset is significant.

Compared to the overall large set of articles in which favelas are a main subject, a greater percentage of favela journalist articles described favelas as having poor sewage and poor quality infrastructure than in the larger dataset, but relatively fewer articles by favela residents suggested favelas have poor quality homes (1 in 17, or 6%, compared to 15% of the larger dataset). **Only 13% of favela journalist articles said favela residents were poor, compared to 34% of all articles with favelas as a main subject.**

Favelas are...

Category	Value
Sites of drugs/gang activity	10
Sites of violence	14
Sites of other criminal activity	0
Sites of stolen utilities	0
Sites of illegal occupation	1
Sites of prostitution/promiscuity	0
Sites of high unemployment	1
Crowded	1
Unsanitary	5
Poor/no quality infrastructure	5
Rickety housing	1
Vulnerable to natural disasters	3
Places with a sense of community	16
A source of culture	10
Sustainable models	0
Affordable housing	1
Flexible, organic, or mixed-use	2
Varying (not all favelas are the same)	2

A greater percentage of articles by favela journalists portray favelas as sites of violence, with a similar percentage between the large and small datasets portraying them as sites of drug/gang activity. However, In the favela journalist dataset, more articles portrayed favelas as having a sense of community than sites of violence. 94% of articles by favela journalists portrayed favelas as having a sharp sense of community, (compared to just 21% of the larger dataset), 59% portrayed favelas as sources of culture (versus 24% overall). Favela residents were portrayed as active agents of change and entrepreneurial in 71% and 47% of favela journalist articles respectively, versus in 31% and 16% respectively in the larger dataset. **Again, although favela journalists regularly feature negative aspects of favelas, they cover positive aspects far more often than the average coverage.**

Luiz Baltar

Conclusion

The dramatic increase in favela coverage in mainstream international media is a truly positive legacy of the 2014 World Cup and 2016 Olympics.

Extensive and diverse coverage of favelas is important for correcting a history of largely uniform, stigmatizing coverage. Negative stereotypes have long served as fodder for top-down interventions that assume no aspects of favelas are worthy of preserving, justifying policies that exacerbate inequality, and, for example, legitimize forced evictions and police violence. Rio de Janeiro, however, is a city that cares about its global image, and international perceptions of its favelas and the city's actions towards them can influence local politics towards a more inclusive approach.

The continued expansion of favela voices will help chip away at tired stigmas, which is why we're so pleased one of the clearest trends from our research is the increase of direct quotes from favela residents over the years, both in absolute numbers of articles and as a percentage of how many articles quote residents.

However, favelas continue to be most often portrayed as sites of violence. The seventeen articles by favela residents offer useful insight into how we can avoid discussion of violence simply perpetuating unproductive stereotypes and justifying state violence in response. All seventeen articles by favela writers acknowledge the pervasive violence that does exist in the city of Rio and which disproportionately affects the lives of favela residents, but they also give substantial space to discussing favela culture, the initiatives of favela residents to change their neighborhoods for the better, policy critiques by residents, and the regular ups and downs of daily life.

Favelas are complex places; their coverage needs to allow for that complexity too.

KEEP UP the attention. Our results show the dramatically expanded platform for favela news and coverage has successfully brought an expanded platform for the voices of favela residents. From numerous interviews with community leaders following the World Cup, we know that favela community leaders genuinely appreciate the opportunity to talk to international journalists and many feel that you are bringing a critical new interest and approach to social issues above and beyond what exists in the national media.

> "It's really positive that the international press is giving attention to the communities, because the national media only gives communities attention when something bad is happening."
>
> – Community leader from Horto, on international media coverage during the World Cup

RECOGNIZE your responsibility to provide a balanced portrayal of favelas. The unambiguously negative articles that perpetuate stigmas about favelas continue to outweigh the unambiguously positive articles that challenge those stigmas and situate residents as potential agents of positive change. Take a moment to consider what underlying impression your work is creating for your readers and the ultimate impact this will have on the communities you write about.

SEEK beyond the outsider perspective. Despite the above point, there was an influx of articles during the World Cup and the year building up to the Olympics that reported from the perspective of the journalist without including favela resident perspectives, and still a number of other articles that asked for athletes or celebrities' opinions of favelas they barely visited. These stories would have been much more interesting with the additional perspective of residents on the issues that concern and interest them.

REQUEST support from CatComm to seek out contacts that can provide perspective on stories relating to their communities. We are here to help.

VARY the topic. The majority of articles that mention favelas still focus on fundamentally negative issues— violence, gangs, drugs, poverty—at the expense of examining housing, community initiatives, culture, activism and a variety of other topics that are begging for greater coverage, and which can provide insight to debates on the same issues in the newspaper's home country.

RESPOND to the growing international familiarity with the word "favela" (thanks to your work) by cutting down on the stigma-heavy English words like "slum," which still pervades more articles than any other alternative word for favela.

EXPLORE favelas beyond those that already receive significant coverage. CatComm is always on hand to offer support for stories on lesser-known favelas.

EMPLOY community journalists to report on their own communities.