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## **Favelas**

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In this article, a reporter talks to Marcos Rodrigo, a graffiti artist trying to make a positive impact on the favelas, poor shanty communities, that he was raised in. Favelas are plagued with poverty, violence, drugs and corruption. The streets are governed by the cocaine traffickers and the gangs they affiliate with, mainly Comando Vermelho (Red Command) and Amigos dos Amigos (Friends of Friends). These gangs rule the streets through police bribes and payoffs, as well as shedding a positive light on gang culture to the youth by involving them in parties and activities geared toward recruitment.

The gangs controlled the favelas with little opposition their most horrific event came with the kidnapping, torture, and murder of a Brazilian journalist in 2002. After the brutal attack, in 2008 the administration of President da Silva decided this coas had to stop. A new order was about to overtake the streets of the favelas and change them unlike they ever were before.

The favelas underwent a pacification, meaning the government came in took control back from the drug gangs with the help of the police and military. The police were meant to contain a control and maintain a presence in the pacified favela for the next 25 years. So far, the government has pacified 28 favelas in Rio de Janeiro, and has plans for three dozen more.

All of this pacifying of the favelas are well and good, but the problem is how do you keep history from repeating and the drug gangs from taking control back. There was a police presence in the past, a corrupt one. How do you keep the newly installed police from falling back to the corrupt ways of the past.

I question the real motive behind the new desire to clean up the favelas, and the real motive is creating a positive image for Brazil in wake of the 2014 World Cup, and 2016 Olympics. Brazil had so much publicity coming to the rising power and needed to show the country in a positive light, but how could it display positivity and power with these poverty stricken favelas all over. Thus the pacification began.

Brazil strives to be seen as a world power and the favelas were the biggest hurdle in their way, so they chose the most visible favelas to clean up and pushing the other 1000 or so to the back burner and out of sight. The pacification of the most visible favelas would shed a wonderful light on Brazil as a progressive country bound to help their impoverished citizen better their situation and communities. This simple doesn't appear to be the case.

In my opinion, the pacification of Brazil's favelas, can be compared to a teenaged girl getting ready for the high school prom. She will dress up, and cover all of her blemishes with makeup to impress her friends and her date, but once she gets home or starts to sweat from dancing, the makeup wears off and the blemishes come back out, usually worse than before. Only time will tell what happens to Brazil's favelas, but the words graffitied on a wall in the favelas seem to gloom in the future, "Don't worry, we'll be back," signed Amigos dos Amigos.