

Advocacy for Community Land Trusts

In Rio de Janeiro's Favelas

introduction

Informal settlements in Rio de Janeiro, known as **favelas**, routinely face the **threat of eviction** from the government. In response, the non-profit **Catalytic Communities** works alongside favela community organizers to grant favelas **collective ownership of their land** through **Community Land Trusts (CLTs)**.

internship activities

Catalytic Communities (CatComm) carries out a variety of activities to advocate for CLTs, which I joined and assisted with, such as:

- **attending city council sessions** to put popular pressure on the councillors as they deliberated on legislation relating to CLTs
- **conducting community workshops** directly in the favelas, teaching residents about the benefits of the model
- **coordinating locally** with favela community organizers
- **publishing informative articles** and video presentations online about CLTs and detailing the recent news and updates on the movement

internship deliverable

Along with the regular internship activities, I also had the opportunity to draft my own **research** relating to the **organization of political resistance in favelas**.

Central Question

Is the advocacy for CLTs by favelas aiming to work within the existing system, or to challenge it?

Methodology

I utilized multiple qualitative research methods to obtain data, including participant observation through my six week internship experience, semi-structured interviews, articles by CatComm members, video recordings of meetings and presentations, and transcripts from community workshops.

Analysis

The evidence indicates that while favelas rely on legal processes to achieve land rights for CLTs, they still aim for socially transformative goals, such as collective land ownership, environmental presentation, and food sovereignty.



cultural immersion

Rio de Janeiro is an incredibly lively city and I took full advantage of it by visiting the historical sites, going to World Cup watch parties, trying delicious street food, and learning Portuguese to talk to locals!



reflection

Through this experience, I have truly learned the **importance of community organization and mobilization**, and the tangible impacts that can have on one's quality of life. Witnessing people **dedicate their lives** to improving their communities inspired me to continue **my work in politics** and seek to make **real change**. I am eternally grateful to the Laidlaw Foundation and all the lovely people at CatComm!!