

Urban Issues & Challenges: Rio de Janeiro

Rio de Janeiro is found in **Brazil** and is the second largest city in Brazil; it was the **capital city** of Brazil until 1960. Brazil can be found in **South America**.

Rio de Janeiro is a city with **global influence**, and is well known around the world for a variety of reasons:



Source: Pens & Patrons

Rio's **carnivals** are world famous, attracting around **5 million visitors** to watch and take part each year. Many cities have tried to replicate carnivals, including Notting Hill in the UK.



Source: Conversant Traveller

Rio de Janeiro is home to **Christ the Redeemer**, a 38m statue built to overlook the city on the hilltops above. It is one of the **seven modern wonders** of the world.



Source: Business Review

Rio hosted the **2016 Olympic & Paralympic Games**. There was great controversy within the city, because construction of the olympic site was delayed and many poor locals were evicted to clear land.



Source: joc.com

Rio is important to the rest of Brazil because it is a **major economic hub**. Some large Brazilian companies have their **headquarters** in Brazil, as well as use the port in Rio de Janeiro for imports and exports.



Source: Seeking Alpha

Brazil has the **largest economy** in South America, and the 8th largest in the world. This is because Brazil has large companies in **oil** manufacturing, **mining** and **telecommunications** (mobile phones).



Source: Booms Beat

Finally, Rio de Janeiro attracts **2 million international tourists** for holidays and cultural trips. Rio is home to many **art galleries** and museums, as well as beaches and the **Copacabana!** (Which features in many films and songs)



Rio de Janeiro is **very attractive** for economic **business opportunities** as well as international **tourist holidays**. A combination of the two has helped Brazil's **economy** to grow, and Rio has had an influx of **migrants** wanting to live here (especially for new business opportunities).

Challenges with Growing Rio

However, Rio de Janeiro's population has **grown too quickly** for the city to grow with it, due to migration. This means that there aren't enough services and resources available for everyone, many people cannot **afford** houses in the city and there aren't enough **jobs** for everyone who needs one.

The city can be split into two; the **richer families** who can afford good housing and can access services easily, and the **poorer families** who cannot afford any housing in Rio and struggle to access services and resources. This is called **inequality**, when there is a difference in **quality of life** between the rich and poor. Take a look at the difference between two areas in Rio:



Source: Drinkteatravel.com

Rochina - The largest favela in South America, located in the south of Rio de Janeiro

- There are **two public schools** for the 100,000 residents that live in the favelas
- Houses have become more structured, but originally were made from **salvaged materials**.
- There is **no waste removal** in streets, so rubbish is abandoned between houses.



Source: Men's Journal

Leblon - The wealthiest district in South America, with the most expensive property per square area of land.

- There are **8 schools** for the 50,000 residents of Leblon
- High class **apartments** and flats are available to rent and buy.
- Most residents take daily strolls on the **beach**
- There are many **tourist attractions** and cultural sites in the area, including many theatres.

Rochina may be the biggest favela, but it is one of the **more developed** shanty towns. Instead, there are camps and more **temporary shelters** where new migrants have chosen to live somewhere else. So there are people living in **poorer conditions** than in Rochina.

There are other problems with living in crowded Rio:



- Access to **doctors and healthcare** varies across the city. This can be shown in pregnant mortality rates, which increase close to favelas.
- Approximately 12% of households in Rio don't have access to **clean running water**. This is because many of the favela's houses didn't have water pipes built into the house. In addition, the **infrastructure** and pipelines to carry water around the city is damaged, so clean water is leaking away.
- Many of the favela's residents tap **illegally** into the **electricity** of their richer neighbours. This means that electricity posts in the street can be made **very unsafe**, with many households connecting to one post. Rio de Janeiro suffers many power cuts.



Source: Daily Mail

- **Crime rates** have increased greatly as the city has grown in recent years. This may be because **unemployment** has increased, so there are more people trying to make money including pickpockets. However, Rio has a severe problem with **youth crime** and **gang violence**, especially in the favelas. Many residents feel unsafe in their homes as the gangs patrol the streets, with guns, and trade drugs for profit.



Source: Business Insider

- Finally, **sewage** isn't properly treated and disposed of from all neighbourhoods in Rio. This means that some neighbourhoods wash their sewage into local rivers and into the **Guanabara Bay**. This pollutes the water and has damaged the wildlife that lives in the bay.

However, Brazil's government wanted to **improve living conditions** for the people of Rio de Janeiro. This was prompted by the **Olympic Games**, because international athletes felt **unsafe** travelling to the city. There are many schemes and strategies to improve Rio's conditions:



Strategies to Improve Rio

Decrease Crime

Armed police (UPP) patrols aim to control the most violent favelas. They aim to scare away gang violence at night, through arrests and raids.

😊 Crime is greatly reduced and many gangs have been dispersed.

😞 Locals don't trust the police and feel their privacy is invaded.

Improve the Favelas

New favelas have been constructed out of the city, to overcome crowding. Some infrastructure has been added to existing favelas, such as bus services.

😊 Favelas have improved, so residents can have safer homes.

😞 Those who move out of the city feel isolated and lacking community.

Reducing Water Pollution

Foreign aid has been used to invest in 12 new sewage plants. The government is also fining any ships that pollute in the bay.

😊 The bay will not become further polluted. Money from fines can be invested into Rio.

😞 The pollution from past dumps will remain in the ocean.

Access to Resources

Medical staff are visiting homes to increase the number of patients seen. More clean water pipelines and electricity cabling have been laid, to increase supply.

😊 Home visits have reduced infant mortality in many favelas

😞 There are still many households that are illegally tapping electricity



Source: *The Intercept.com*



Source: *ToledoBlade.com*

