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A Story of a Slum: Representing Conflict and Audience Reception in a Brazilian *favela*

How do dwellers of a slum threatened by eviction react to a fictional drama about a slum under threat of eviction? Based on ethnographic work conducted from May 2007 to June 2008, this paper discusses the reception of a primetime television soap-opera in a *favela* located in São Paulo, Brazil. It narrates how overwhelming similarities between life and fiction created at first an enormous amount of interest among the inhabitants of this slum towards the most viewed television show in Brazil. And the eventual decline in interest when the episodes steered away from what the inhabitants were most interested in watching: their own social conflicts represented in television. Juxtaposing and analyzing the audience's opinion about the show, the narrative itself and its author's opinion published on his personal blog, this paper exposes the different expectations and interests involved on the discussion of land rights by means of the dramatic genre.