

Invisibility and vulnerability of tenements: disputes over centrality in the port area of Rio de Janeiro

Abstract

This article aims to discuss the first results of the research developed in the port area of Rio de Janeiro around the existing slum tenements (called tenements, that are several buildings with common bedrooms where many lower class families live together) in the region, its housing conditions and the profile of its population. In the absence of information about this form of housing in the diagnosis presented by the city hall in the scope of the Social Interest Housing Plan, in the second half of 2015, the aim was to fill this gap in a street-to-street work, identifying real estate that operates in the area of the Urban Operation of Porto Maravilha. By the field survey, it was possible to identify 54 tenements in the port area, and estimate the resident population in these properties in 1120 people, living in 712 rooms, distributed in the neighbourhoods Santo Cristo, Gamboa and Saúde, and also in streets of the Center, within the limits of Operation. The aim was to deconstruct the current perception, which stigmatizes these spaces and their inhabitants—the precarious and marginal, showing that the tenements are marked by a great heterogeneity of living conditions and social groups, unified in their demand to live in the central area.

Keywords: popular tenements, central areas, housing

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Introduction

Since 2009, the project for the renovation of the port area, implemented through the Porto Maravilha Consortium Urban Operation, managed by the Urban Development Company of the Region of Porto de Rio de Janeiro-CDURP, is underway in Rio de Janeiro City. The Urban Operation involves works and services in the 5 million square meters of the Area of Special Urban Interest (AEIU) of the Region of Porto do Rio, in the amount of R\$8 billion reais, implemented through a private public partnership (PPP), expired by the Porto Novo Consortium (integrated by Odebrecht Infraestrutura, OAS and Carioca Christiani Nielsen Engenharia). The analysis of the interventions foreseen in the scope of the Urban Operation reveals the absence of investments in housing of social interest, aiming at the permanence of the current residents and the expansion of housing aimed at the working classes. In other words, there are no public resources being invested in housing, despite the fact that the population increase and the population density are predicted for the region, which, according to City Hall calculations, would increase from the current 32 thousand to 100 thousand inhabitants by 2020, living in the neighborhoods of Santo Cristo, Gamboa, Health and parts of the City Center.

The absence of policies and investments in social housing made several popular organizations pressionssem the Municipality and CDURP to develop a social housing plan for the port area, which occurred during 2015 through public hearings and a conference, held in August 2015, focused on the discussion and approval of the housing plan of social interest of the port area.¹ It is noteworthy that the diagnosis made to subsidize the preparation of said plan does not mention anything about the existence of tenements in the port area,² although it is well known the existence of this form of housing in the downtown area. Likewise, it is surprising that there is no official information on the public agencies on tenements, despite

the evidence that this form of housing in the central area is expressive and widespread. The invisibility of tenements in the official diagnoses also meant that public policy proposals aimed were not discussed to the slums and their inhabitants, since its existence was not recognized.

This picture is even more alarming if we take into account the removals carried out by the city hall during the works of Porto Maravilha. According to data from the Popular Committee of the World Cup and Olympics in Rio de Janeiro³ between 2009 and 2015, at least 535 families were removed from the port area, reaching, notably, occupations organized by housing movements in buildings that did not fulfill its social function, many of them abandoned for decades. This picture depicts the city's unwillingness to ensure that low-income families remain in the region, since many of these buildings remain empty. In addition, the difficulties faced in accessing public information suggest that these numbers may be even higher and, according to reports by some residents of the region, real estate that operated as tenements may also have been the target of this policy of removal.

In this context, the purpose of this article⁴ is to summarize the results of research on slums in Port Area⁵ held from field survey,

³Available at: http://www.childrenwin.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/Dossie-Committee%20C3%AA-Rio2015_low.pdf.

⁴A first version of this article was presented at the XVIII National Meeting of the Postgraduate Association in Urban and Regional Planning, held in 2007 (SANTOS JUNIOR; LACERDA, WERNECK; RIBEIRO, 2017)

⁵To run the survey was conducted fieldwork, street by street, which sought to identify the existence of rooms for rent, wondering at newsstands, bars and the residents of the slums. For the collection and organization of information, were developed three forms: (i) the first, completed by own field agents, gathered information to identify the tenement, even when it was not possible to interview any resident, not the administrator or owner; (ii) the second, constituted on a questionnaire of questions addressed to the owners (as) or managers (as), when it was possible to interview them (as), and was focused on information concerning the operation of the establishment; and (iii) third, it was constituted in a questionnaire of questions addressed to the residents of the slums, respondents randomly when possible, and sought to draw a social profile of this social group and their living conditions.

¹To see the full text of the Social Housing Plan.

²See http://www.portomaravilha.com.br/conteudo/outros/Diagnostico_PHIS%20Porto%20rev%20abr2016.pdf, accessed October 2016.

street by street, to identify the slums and the profile of its residents. The results confirm the presence and expressiveness of this form of housing in the central area. At the same time, we seek, from a historical perspective and critical theory, to discuss the importance of tenements as a form of access to centrality, the reasons for their reproduction over time, even if there is no regulation of these establishments by the public power, and the meanings attributed by its residents. The survey was carried out in the neighborhoods of Santo Cristo, Gamboa, Saúde and part of the Center, included in the area of Urban Operation of Porto Maravilha. The concept of tenement adopted in this survey was any property of rented rooms, cohabited by more than one family. Typically they are rooms for rented rooms, with shared bathrooms, some with communal kitchens, others with no specific space for this, but being allowed to cook in the room itself. The tenements are also called dwellings or houses of rooms, or rent rooms.⁶ In fact, it was found that most of the owners, managers and residents do not use the term tenement, perhaps by the pejorative character appearing in the popular imagination, as synonymous with insecurity, exploitation, poverty and unsanitary conditions, also recalling the famous tenement demolished early twentieth century, the Hog's Head. Thus, in general, they use the terms rent rooms or rooms.

A Little History: From the demographic explosion to the attack on the tenements

The population growth in Rio de Janeiro has increased considerably since the beginning of the 19th century. The arrival of the Portuguese court to the city in 1808 brought about the inconveniences arising from the installation of approximately 15,000 people-including nobles, military, high-ranking officials and the royal family-in an urban space with no more than 50,000 inhabitants. Soon after, the opening of the Brazilian ports to the friendly nations in 1810 would intensify the commercial movement in the capital, impelling a new migratory cycle. As a result, the population of Rio de Janeiro had practically doubled in less than two decades, reaching about 100 thousand inhabitants in 1822, and reaching an impressive 135 thousand in 1840¹ century. The abolition of slavery in 1888 led to an exodus of freed slaves from the coffee region of the state of Rio to the city, while European immigration was encouraged by the state to replace slave labor in plantations of coffee and to "purify" the Brazilian breed by laundering the population.² Thus, between 1872 and 1890, the city witnessed a new demographic leap, from 266 000 to 522 000 inhabitants, and would still have to absorb another 200 thousand, arrived in the last decade of the century.³

At that time, the urban fabric of Rio de Janeiro already expanded to the suburbs of the South Zone and to the suburbs. However, it was still the central region that concentrated the jobs, bringing together not only commerce and services, but also a large part of the city's manufacturing park. Despite the expansion of the public transport network from the 1860s onwards, transport costs were difficult for the vast majority. The labor market, on the one hand, and the precariousness of labor relations, on the other, thus forced the population to congregate in downtown neighborhoods, crowding into the tenements that multiplied. As a reflection of the population explosion, tenants lived in numbers between 1880 and 1890, totaling 100,000 people.²

As is well known, the tenement structure was precarious. Owners and landlords earned extraordinary profit margins from a small

⁶According to the Concise Oxford Dictionary of the English Language (objective publisher, 2001), tenement is defined as "the house that serves as the collective housing for the poor; rooming house; Pig's head".

investment, such as building small houses or dividing existing rooms into tiny rooms.² The hygienic conditions of these overcrowded dwellings rapidly deteriorated, turning tenements into foci of sanitary infections and epidemics-such as the bubonic plague, yellow fever, and smallpox-that plagued the city. Prainha, Saúde and Gamboa-areas that not only contained slums, but also where port activities were carried out, with intense flow of cargoes and people-were epicenters of irradiation of the diseases, reason that led to the construction of the hospital Nossa Senhora da Saúde, installed at the top of Morro da Saúde, in 1853, and a bridge for the removal of corpses to the Caju Cemetery on the coast of Health, just behind the hospital, in 1877.¹

Thus, slums, also associated with marginality, became the focus of the hygienist discourse, which gained momentum after the Proclamation of the Republic in 1889. Doctors and sanitarians argued that social factors were capable of intensifying the natural causes of illnesses-such as conditions unhealthy environments and malnutrition, so it was imperative to fight against each other.² In addition, it was necessary to the republican regime the need to ensure stability to the new power pact that was organized since the coup, against which the capital-mobilized politically, socially heterogeneous and fragmented, undisciplined and divided by internal conflicts-a danger, triggered by military upheavals, popular riots and workers' strikes.³ In this way, a policy of control over the central city space was implemented, whose execution implied the banishment of the popular strata.² It is possible to say that this policy was based on three main elements: (a) the restrictions on the operation, the prohibitions and the progressive eradication of the tenements in the central area of the city; (b) the criminalization of the economic activities and cultural practices proper to the popular classes, indispensable to their reproduction; and (c) encouraging the construction of working houses, erected in other parts of the city.

Legislation has proved to be a key instrument in this process. In fact, the imposition of legal restrictions on tenements had already been observed since the Empire: since 1856, sanitary standards for the granting of construction permits became more severe, and, from 1880, the Central Board of Hygiene became prohibit new construction, requiring the closure of several collective houses.² However, compliance with the legislation was never strictly enforced to a large extent due to the actions of tenant owners, who, organized around the Society of Landlords and Landlords, had a regular recourse to the Judiciary and to the Municipal Council for block the initiatives of the Central Board of Hygiene.² From 1889, the republican regime, relying on new social protagonists, reinforced the authoritarian nature of the hygienist measures and gave vent to the new reflections on the management of the urban space, curtailing at the same time, the possibilities of participation of a great part of the population in political life.^{2,3} Thus, shortly after the provisional government was installed, the Code of Postures of 1890 was decreed, which concentrated powers in the hands of the General Inspection of Hygiene, in addition to imposing sanitary requirements on buildings and expanding social control over the population that lived in inns and guest houses.² The 1891 Constitution, on the other hand, excluded the overwhelming majority of the political right of the vote by requiring literacy, as well as dissociating the municipal government from the representation of citizens, since the mayor, whose position he created, would be appointed by the president of Republic throughout the First Republic.³ Doctors or engineers for the most part, mayors were often brought in from other states and were oblivious to city life. As José Murilo de Carvalho³ points out, "The government's way of opening up the path to authoritarianism, which at best was authoritarianism illustrated, based on real or presumed competence, of technicians".

Shortly thereafter, the eradication policy of the tenements managed to demolish the famous Pig's Head, which, according to the newspaper reports at the time, housed about 4,000 people. The resistance of the cortiço to the raids to eliminate it, during the Empire, had made the Head of Porco-located near the Central Railroad of Brazil, at the feet of the hill of the Livramento-the most famous tenement of the city. There was a rumor among the people that its existence was due to the influence of its illustrious owner, Count d'Eu, the husband of Princess Isabel. In 1891, however, the municipality closed a contract with engineer Carlos Sampaio, who proposed to extend some streets and open a tunnel through the hill (the current João Ricardo tunnel) with the purpose of building buildings there and exploring a line of rails.⁴ In the midst of worsening epidemics in the early 1890s, Mayor Barata Ribeiro issued a decree on January 26, 1893, allowing himself to fight against the tenements, and on that same day, he began the demolition of the Cabe de Porco a from an army of Public Hygiene Officers, police officers, cavalry, municipal workers and workers assigned by engineers such as Vieira Souto and Carlos Sampaio himself.⁴ By the end of the day, the tenement had disappeared. The newspapers announced the event and announced the brief commencement of the tunnel works that would be completed only thirty years later, when Sampaio was the mayor of the city.⁵ Due to the social repercussions of the demolition of the Cabe de Poco, and also seeking to position itself in front of the public opinion, Barata Ribeiro lowered the decree n° 32, of January 29, 1893, expanding the benefits, mainly fiscal, for the production of villages workers, who had been granted in the Empire.² The initiative contributed to the development of the construction and real estate development sectors; however, the number of houses built was insignificant, and the siege of the tenements became increasingly violent.

The texts of the law were little by little increasing the perimeters of prohibition of the installation of the tenements. Thus, Decree No. 762, of June 1, 1900, considerably increased the perimeter of prohibition of collective housing, allowing its existence only in the parishes of Gávea, Engenho Velho, São Cristóvão, Inhaúma and Irajá.² Two years later, Decree No. 391 of February 10, 1903, written down when Pereira Passos had already assumed the municipal government, not only prohibited new construction but also prevented any work, remodeling or repair that would allow the tenements to be maintained, tolerating only.² The management of Pereira Passos signified a new phase of recrudescence against the tenements and the popular classes. Indicated by President Rodrigues Alves in 1902, Pereira Passos was entrusted with the task of sanitizing the port of Rio de Janeiro, whose outdated infrastructure imposed barriers to the growth of trade, to beautify the city and to free it from disease, transforming the capital in the light of European cities. For this, the president has equipped the new mayor of full power, lowering, the day before the inauguration of Pereira Passos, a federal law that restructured the municipal administration, putting off for six months the elections to the Municipal Council.³ Without opposition, Pereira Passos used his discretionary powers to put into effect a set of decrees intended to facilitate the implementation of the works of the "Reform Steps". Between 1903 and 1910, Rio then underwent a radical transformation. On the one hand, the federal government was in charge of improving the port, which included: the landfill of Prainha, Valongo and the entire coast of the port area, extending the Mangue canal to the sea; and the opening of major highways for the circulation of goods, namely Central Avenue, Mangue Avenue and Cais Avenue (renamed Rio Branco Avenue, Francisco Bicalho Avenue and Rodrigues Alves

Avenue, respectively). On the other hand, the municipal administration concentrated its efforts on enlargement, extension and opening of new streets in densely populated areas-a project known as "bota abaixo"-as well as building plazas and monuments such as the Municipal Theater, the National Museum of Fine Arts and the National Library.

At the end of the administration of Mayor Pereira Passos, in 1906, about 1,700 buildings had been demolished, and at least 20,000 people were removed.² The central parishes of Candelária, Santa Rita (where today are the neighborhoods Saúde and Gamboa) and Sacramento (comprising the vicinity of Praça Tiradentes, the Sahara and the Red Cross) were the most sacrificed.⁶ But it was not only the ostensible demolitions that had discouraged the population: the valorization and speculation of urban land, and its effects on rental prices; new taxes, resulting from the provision of new services, such as street lighting; the constraints and architectural parameters required for new construction; and the prohibition of economic activities linked to the subsistence of the popular classes acted as a powerful segregating force.⁷ This consolidated a space division in the city of Rio de Janeiro, based on the hierarchy of places. While the center was reserved for business, the neighborhoods close to the South Zone, located along the seafront, were intended for the middle and upper classes. The poor were left with the suburbs. In fact, a large part of the expelled population eventually moved to the suburban parishes closest to the Center, such as Engenho Novo and Inhaúma.⁶ However, transport costs and the high cost of building materials made it difficult for workers to move to the suburban.⁷ Many then climbed the hills - especially the Morro da Providencia, which at that time was already occupied by families of freed slaves and soldiers from the Paraguayan War-giving rise to the favelas. It is in this sense that Lilian Vaz⁵ says that "the favela has in its origin the action of the same socio-spatial process that determined the end of tenements." But many families continued to rent rooms. The tenements continued to exist, covering the signs of their existence to survive the persecution and the numerous transformations and urban reorganizations that the city has been experiencing ever since.

Visiting the tenements in the urban landscape of Rio de Janeiro

Urban and social invisibility is a constitutive element of the history of slums in Rio de Janeiro and a central element to understand the dynamics that cross and constitute these spaces. This invisibility seems to be associated with what Wacquant calls, discussing the case of racial segregation in the United States, the link between the territorial stigma, lack of security and the abandonment by the state, tonando the residents of these areas the "City Outcasts".⁸ The first expression of the invisibility of this form of housing is in the total absence of information about tenements in municipal public agencies. The city of Rio de Janeiro has no lev antamento property running renting rooms or on the socioeconomic profile of its residents. Once the lack of public information was verified, the strategy for conducting the survey was to identify, from street to street, real estate that works as renting rooms. But during the work of identification he ran into a first practical difficulty: most of the real estate that works as a tenement is not identifiable by the facade, and does not have, in most cases, any type of sign or advertisement of room rent. In general, when real estate shows some identification, they call themselves a hotel or lodging, even when they serve as permanent housing for part of their "guests." As will be seen in the course of this article, the

question is here in the fluidity between what is considered permanent or temporary housing for tenants.

Given the difficulty in identifying the properties by their physical characteristics or advertisements, the field work was organized in a way that ensured that the teams crossed all the streets of the area that includes the Maravilha Port. In general, the strategy used to identify tenements was based on the indications given by local and informal traders in the region and by the tenants themselves identified-given the turnover of some tenants among the available tenements; many know how to point out other real estate where it is possible to rent a room. In addition, in some cases, owners and/or administrators were responsible for more than one tenement in the region. With this methodology, it was possible to identify 54 cortiços located in the port area of the urban operation, distributed in the neighborhoods Santo Cristo, Gamboa and Saúde, and also in streets of the Center, involving, according to research estimates, at least 712 rooms, approximately 1,120 people (Figure 1). Of the total number of tenements identified, it was possible to interview 25 administrators or property owners, who provided information on the operation of the establishments. In other cases, when it was possible, we sought information with neighbors, local businesses or residents. Simultaneously, seeking to draw the profile of tenants' dwellings, they sought to interview them, which demanded the return to the property after a first contact where the objectives of the survey were explained. Thus, it was possible to interview 105 dwellers living in the tenements identified in the port area, which can be considered a very significant sample of the total universe of the residents in these conditions. It should be noted that it was not always possible to conduct interviews with residents, either because of the difficulty of access to some sites controlled by local traffic, or because of their distrust, since the vulnerability and informality of this form of housing also brings insecurity, since there is no contract to ensure that they remain in the dwellings, which is aggravated in the cases of some immigrants, who possibly live illegally in the country (Figure 1).

During the field visits and interviews with tenants, it is clear the existence of information networks through which people access this form of housing, in general, workers from other Brazilian states, seafarers, immigrants many of them in irregular situations in the country-and low-income families. Thus, networks of contacts between people living or already living in tenements are being formed, through which information is transmitted about the best alternatives for room rentals in the central region of Rio de Janeiro, depending on the needs and possibilities of those who seek. Also with regard to invisibility, the situation of immigrants seems to be a peculiarity in relation to other social groups. In many cases, the invisibility of tenements can be used as a survival strategy. That is, for many of the immigrants living in an irregular situation in the country, tenements and their social and urban invisibility are presented as a strategic means for those who are also, to some extent, invisible in the country. Also because of this, the interviews were more difficult with this group. But this invisibility has a price. At first, we can understand the invisibility in the urban landscape of the tenements as a strategy to overcome its illegality, allowing the reproduction of its operation. However, with the absence of laws regulating and supervising the operation of these properties, in addition to the vulnerability characteristic of the majority of its inhabitants, many of them work in precarious conditions, without guaranteeing the minimum conditions of a decent housing for its inhabitants.

In general, it is common to associate the slums with the precariousness and the poor conditions of hygiene and of dwelling, vision that goes back to the beginning of the century, as shown previously. The survey carried out sought to overcome this strongly spread representation in society and to identify the concrete conditions of these houses, in order to evaluate the possibilities of the tenements to become decent housing alternatives in the city center. As previously recorded, the field survey found it difficult to obtain information on tenement housing conditions, due to the unavailability of many owners and administrators to grant interviews and the inability of field researchers to enter several tenements to verify conditions. But based on the interviews given by 25 managers or owners⁷ and also for residents was possible to draw a fairly representative picture of the slum dwelling conditions.

According to the informants, there are 712 rooms in the 54 slums identified, and in two cases this information was not obtained, which indicates that the total number of rooms is still slightly higher than this one. Taking into account the universe of 52 tenements in which it was possible to obtain this information, it can be seen that in most cases (56%) these are small dwellings composed of one to ten rooms (29 cases), there is also a (17 cases, corresponding to 33%) of middle establishments composed of 11 to 25 rooms. The large tenements with more than 25 rooms are minorities (only six cases, corresponding to 11%), but include a tenement with 60 and another with 70 rooms (Figure 2).

The size of the rooms and the number of people sharing each room seems to be very variable, even in a single tenement, which may have rooms with different sizes. Taking into account the information of the 25 administrators and owners, complemented by information collected from the residents, a fairly accurate picture can be reached, in which it is evident that few tenements with rooms shared by more than two people. In fact, 22 dwellings (42%) live only one person per

⁷During the survey of the slums were interviewed 25 owners (as) or managers (as) these establishments. Among these, 12 were owners (as) and 13 administrators (the), the well balanced gender distribution: between the owners (as), six were women and six were men; among the managers (as), seven were women and six were men. Almost all were Brazilians, with the exception of one owner of Portuguese nationality. Among those who reported their naturalness, 10 were in Rio de Janeiro, 7 came from the Northeastern states (three Ceará, two of Maranhão, one of Paraíba and Rio Grande do Norte) and one was of Minas Gerais. Most of those who reported their age, 12 people, was aged between 30 and 59 years, while five others were between 60 and 75 years. Among those who reported their marital status, 11 were single, married five, four and two divorced widows. As on issues involving the ownership of real estate in general nebulae, listening to many stories about owners and managers of slums, involving cases where the true owners would be missing, renters residents sublocariam rooms trafficking would control and would manage some establishments and also a case where a single police would control about 15 slums in the central region. How were cases narrated by the residents, it was not possible to check its veracity in the conducted survey. Listening to many stories about owners and managers of slums, involving cases where the true owners would be missing, renters residents sublocariam rooms trafficking would control and would manage some establishments and also a case where a single police would control about 15 slums in the region central. How were cases narrated by the residents, it was not possible to check its veracity in the conducted survey. Listening to many stories about owners and managers of slums, involving cases where the true owners would be missing, renter's resident's sublocariam rooms trafficking would control and would manage some establishments and also a case where a single police would control about 15 slums in the region central. How were cases narrated by the residents, it was not possible to check its veracity in the conducted survey.

Virtually all tenements had collective toilets, with the exception of two buildings that had bathrooms in the rooms, and in some cases it was possible to find rooms with or without private bathroom in the same tenement, varying the value of the room. From the information on the total number of bathrooms in each tenement, provided by 22 of the managers and owners interviewed, a relation can be drawn between the number of dwellers in the tenements by available toilets. Of this universe, nine tenements had between 1 to 5 residents per bathroom; six tenements had between six and ten residents per bathroom; and seven tenements had between 11 and 17 inhabitants per bathroom, constituting, at least apparently, in the most serious cases of

access to good hygiene conditions. However, during the field survey, it was recorded the testimony of 14 residents, from three different tenements, who declared that they live in dwellings with an average of more than 20 people per bathroom, which may suggest that access to good housing conditions. Hygiene can be even more dramatic. But in addition to the amount of toilets, the problems also refer to the infrastructural conditions of the available toilets. It was verified in the field survey tenements with bathrooms in bad conditions, the great majority without hot water, and in some cases without piped water, as can be evidenced in Figure 3.

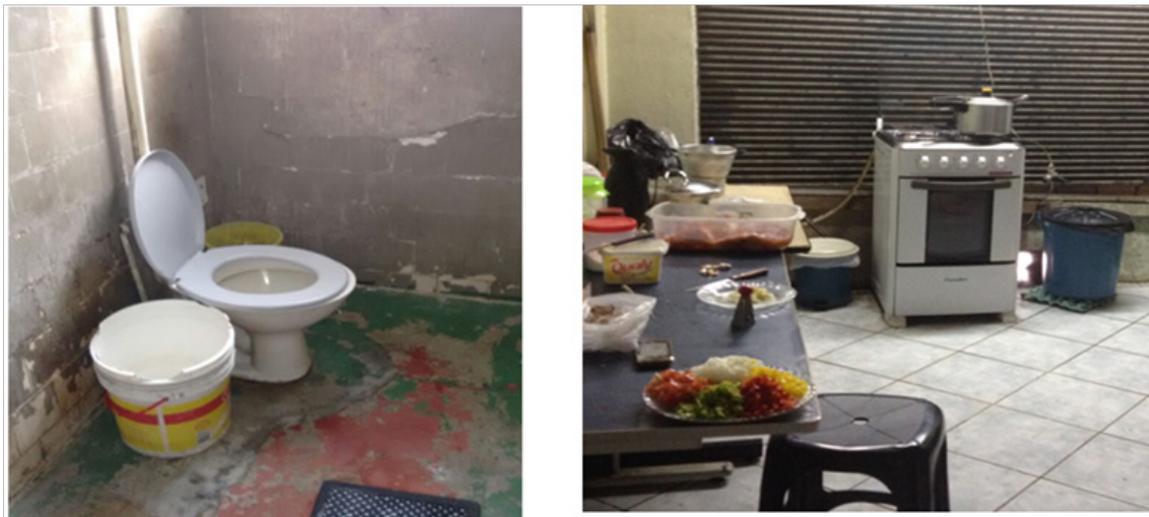


Figure 3 Collective bathroom and kitchen images of tenement in the Port Area of Rio de Janeiro, 2016.

Source: Metropolis Observatory Survey, 2016.

As regards access to collective kitchens, the situation is also very precarious. Of the 51 tenements where this information was obtained, it was found that 28 tenements (55%) had collective kitchens, but a significant number of 23 tenements (45%), not obliging their residents to dine out of the house many reported eating at the popular restaurant in Central Brazil, and/or use the room environment with small stoves, with or without permission from administrators to make small meals. Although some residents recognize the risk of cooking in makeshift facilities, they said the economy makes a difference at the end of the month, allowing the villager to even send money to the family, which often lives in other cities or other states (Figure 3). The invisibility of the tenements and their informal operation, without recognition of the municipal legislation, certainly feed the situation of precariousness verified in a great part of the real estate. But the residents of the tenements still suffer from two more problems: the lack of contracts that give the least security to their stay in the rooms and the price of rent, relatively high given the housing conditions offered. Of the 25 administrators or owners who gave information on these issues, the vast majority, 20 of them, do not establish any form of contract with the residents. The others stated that they signed some type of contract with their tenants, which could vary between 12 and 30 months. The absence of a contract makes it difficult to prove address, some residents reported having problems opening accounts at the bank, obtaining notary services, and even signing up for social programs, such as Bolsa Família. Finally, complementing this first picture of the living conditions of the slums, we tried to make an assessment of property conservation status from the perception of field researchers,

they should indicate whether they had bad conditions (with structural problems present a risk to residents, as anchored walls, committed woods and improvised covers), good (no apparent structural problems) or medium (with light structural problems such as seepstions, wiring and exposed pipes). In this case, the sample corresponds to 48 buildings where it was possible for the researchers to carry out this evaluation.

It is noteworthy that only five tenements (11% of the total) were considered in good conservation conditions. But it is also worth noting that half of the properties visited, totaling 24 slums (representing 50%), were considered in a medium conservation state, which means that with some investment in their infrastructure they could become a good option for decent housing. In any case, this does not eliminate the seriousness of finding 19 slums (39%) in very poor housing conditions. The analysis of the conditions of tenements indicates, contrary to current perception, a very heterogeneous picture, which in a simplified way could be divided into the existence of two groups of tenements. A first group consisting of individual and collective rooms that have good infrastructure and constitute an interesting housing alternative for some social groups that demand residence in the central area of the city. And a second group, consisting of rooms in poor condition and that constitute housing for various social groups for lack of alternative housing in the central area of the city. It should be noted that most of the tenements, perhaps the majority, are in an intermediary position between these two groups, with the potential to be a good housing alternative if reforms were undertaken and

regulations were established to ensure certain guarantees, including a stay contract and some control over the price of rents. Unfortunately, however, the current situation, which fuels the vicious circle between invisibility, illegality, vulnerability and precariousness, makes the space of the tenements a martyrdom, a violation of the right to housing, for a large part of the population that needs to live and live in the City.

The profile of the dwellers of the tenements and their living conditions

Who are the residents of the tenements? How do you live in these spaces? As in the case of housing conditions, there is a social perception that associates the resident with marginalization, which links these people to the poorer strata of society. With can be seen, the survey reveals a mixed social profile, diverse social groups that require access to the city center. It is worth noting that the research did not intend to do a census of the residents, but to draw a general profile from a randomly defined sample, based on the residents' willingness to grant interviews. Of course this poses some limitations, since the survey was not able to incorporate residents living in irregular conditions, either by their nationality (immigrants without a permanent visa) or by their involvement in illegal activities, such as drug trafficking. Thus, it should be clear that this is the profile of a sample of tenants, but reveals important information about this social universe. The sample of this survey consists of 105 inhabitants, which represents about 9.4% of the total estimated population as dwellers of tenements in the port area. Of the 105 residents interviewed, 77 were men and 28 women, which is perhaps expressed by the fact that men are the majority of those who rent rooms, because, as mentioned earlier, many tenements rent rooms for men only. Of the 77 men interviewed, 51 were fathers, but only four (about 10.5% of the sample) lived with their children. In the case of the 28 women, 23 were mothers and the majority, totaling 13 women (72.2% of the sample) lived in the rooms with their children.

The paternity and maternity situation is reflected in the age group of the sample, which is relatively less young than adults. A little more than half (54%) of the sample of residents interviewed was between 30 and 59 years of age. The other part consisted of residents aged between 16 and 29 years (27%) and over the age of 60 (19%). Although most of the 105 interviewees were Brazilian, it was possible to include ten people (4 Peruvians, 2 Argentines, 2 Uruguayans, 1 Chilean and 1 Venezuelan) and 4 African countries (3 Congolese and 1 Senegalese). But it is necessary to register the difficulty found to interview residents of other nationalities, given the uncertainty regarding their stay in the country. Among 91 Brazilians, most of the sample was outside the city of Rio de Janeiro. Apart from the 30% declared to have come from the city itself, we can see the weight of the Northeastern states, from which 47% of the residents came. Another 20% declare them to be from other Southeast states and only 1% from southern states. An important dimension to understanding the profile of tenant dwellers is their current occupation. Based on the categories used by the Observatory of the Metropolises (Ribeiro and Ribeiro, 2013), it is clear that the majority of residents (35% of the sample) is linked occupations to unskilled tertiary involving street (most of the sample, with 16 people in this occupation), non-specialized service providers (10 people), and domestic workers (six people). Another very expressive group is composed of inactive and retired people, comprising 21% of the sample (19 people). In addition, we highlight the specialized tertiary workers (18% of the sample),

involving trade workers (six people) and specialized service providers (11 people, including 10 waiters or cooks); medium occupations (12% of the sample), involving artists and the like (nine people) and office occupations (two people); and secondary workers (11% of the sample), comprising auxiliary workers (seven people, five of whom are seamen) and construction workers (three). Finally, there is a small group of unemployed (3% of the sample corresponding to 3 people).

It can be seen that, to a large extent, they are occupations whose work opportunities are strongly concentrated in the central area of the city, as in the case of street vending, working in the kitchen and restaurants, shops and sailors. But the presence of retired and inactive people, who probably choose to live in tenements because they are in a well-infrastructured area with good services, also draws attention. In addition to outlining the profile of the residents of the sample, we sought to characterize the living conditions experienced in tenements from some variables. Initially, it was tried to identify if the tenements were permanent dwelling for the own residents or if they considered their stay as provisional, which also can be compared with the time in which they lived the rooms.

In general, tenants are considered by the residents themselves as permanent forms of housing, as declared by 98 of the 105 residents of the sample. Only seven residents claimed to be in the rooms provisionally, until they found a definitive solution or during a certain period (as one of the residents who said that he was living in the room only during the period of the Olympics and that he would leave afterwards). But it is also verified that the residence time in the present dwelling room is quite varied, which can perhaps be explained by the great turnover in the different tenements, since 53 inhabitants (representing 52% of the sample) say that they had previously lived in other rooms. In general, city centers are well-infrastructured areas, with electricity, water supply and sewage collection systems already consolidated. The scenario found in the tenements seems to confirm this proposition: all 105 residents of the sample pointed out that the properties have electricity and access to water supply. As seen above, most of the rooms do not have individual bathroom and kitchen, which means that access to water is collectivized. However, this does not prevent problems in the provision of services, most probably due to the informality of the connections or the precariousness of the existing infrastructures, as was explained by 40% of the sample residents who said they suffer, or sometimes or frequently, problems in the water supply.

As we have already seen, the conditions for the preservation of real estate, as well as the services infrastructure of the tenements, are very variable and this is reflected in the variation of rents paid by the residents, which confirms in a certain way the information provided by the owners and administrators. In view of the price ranges charged by the tenements, it is noticed that the majority of the residents pay intermediate values. Thus, it was found that 59% of the residents of the sample (representing 60 people) pay \$ 301.00 from R and R \$500, while 28% of the residents (28 persons) pay the lowest values range between US \$ 150 and 300 per month. In the range of payment of higher values, between R \$501.00 and R \$800.00, were only 13% of the residents of the sample, or the minority. Rental values reflect several variables: the location in the central area, the conditions of property conservation, the infrastructure of services, but also the informality of rental contracts. In fact, almost all the residents of the sample, corresponding to 94% of the people, did not have rental contracts.

This picture of the living conditions of the dwellers of the tenements reinforces the idea of heterogeneity and diversity as the main characteristics of this social group, making it impossible and incorrect to build an ideal type of the dweller. Within this social group, it is possible to distinguish several subgroups. Some are retired and inactive, many away from their families of origin, who find in the space of the tenements not only the accessibility to the network of services offered by the city center, but also an affective community, a network of sociability that offers new possibilities for the social reproduction. Seu Florindo, 70, was in this situation. A retired single-parent dancer with no children, he had lived in this slum of Rua Cunha Barbosa in Gamboa for 25 years, renting nine single rooms for singles. Seu Florindo proudly told his story as a black dancer, from his travels around the world, and says: "I like this place, I feel welcomed."

Others are street vendors, informal or unskilled workers, many living alone or away from their families, who seek to survive on the streets of the city center and who find in the tenements an alternative housing near their work area. A good example illustrating this group's situation is the story of Leandro, 21, a bachelor. Two years ago a resident of a slum at Rua Senador Pompeu, at the Center, where he lived alone. Leandro came from Espírito Santo, where he left a son to work as a kitchen helper. As he reports: "I earn 1,300.00 per month, I pay R \$ 400.00 for rent, I send R \$ 600.00 for my son, and I live with the rest. As soon as possible, I want to go back to my city." Still others are workers, neither so young nor old, but who are still in a stage of life of building and consolidating their professional space, working in commerce, as waiters or cooks, many still single, and find in the tenements a housing alternative consistent with their income and close to their potential job market. The story of Katia is very illustrative of this group. Kátia is 34 years old, without children, and she has lived in a tenement for three years in Rua João Homem, Saúde, in a room alone. Natural of the Northeast, in her own words she says: "I intend to raise money to go back and buy a house in Maranhão, Rio is very violent." But there are also families, housewives and workers in different non-specialized branches, living with their children, husbands and wives, in small rooms without conditions to shelter a family, for whom housing in the tenements can be an experience of marginalization, stigma and exclusion social. Dona Laura, 47, was working as a street vendor, was married, and two years ago she was living with her three children in the tenement of Senador Pompeu Street, downtown. She had already enrolled in the My Home My Life program, but, according to her, "never been called." As she said, "My dream is to get a bigger house to house my family, even if it's in the West Zone, and even if I keep working downtown".⁸

The reality of tenement houses is complex not only because of the diverse set of housing conditions found, many of them marked by precariousness and vulnerability, but also by the conditions of labor exploitation, the high costs and the precariousness of the mobility system in the city, which makes housing far from work a serious problem. All this makes room rent, even in precarious conditions, an alternative housing in the central regions for different social groups. Thus, these different social groups that compose the population that inhabits the tenements in Rio de Janeiro are unified around the demand to live in the center of the city. In fact, this form of housing is historically part of the landscape of several Brazilian and Latin American cities, and it remains one of the options of the popular

⁸In the first case it is a small tenement of only 5 individual rooms and in the second case it is a tenement whose rooms are shared by five people. In this case, it can be said that in just the first case, the bathrooms are individual.

sectors to live in urban centers, even though living in conditions of vulnerability and conflict.⁹ According to Lefebvre,¹⁰ on the one hand, the urban phenomenon overcomes the old contradiction between rural-urban, it brings out the contradiction between center and periphery, and it is from this contradiction that we can understand the issue of centrality to the author. For Lefebvre,¹⁰ the central regions would be those that bring together power, culture, quality of life and consumption, not necessarily limited to the geographic center. Thus, we can understand the need for access to centrality as a unifying demand for the different social groups that support the maintenance of tenements in the city centers.¹¹ This can be well illustrated by the main motivations of the residents. The motivations most pointed out by the residents of the sample to choose to live in this region of the city were the fact that they liked it because it is close to the center and well-infrastructure, with 42% of the answers (46 people) and working in the region, with 41% people). But they were also cited as motivations to like the region for its people, its history and its places, cited by 13% of the residents (14 people) and have an identity with the region because they have relatives or friends in the area, with 9%).¹² Finally, it is worth noting that only 10% of the residents (11 people) said that they were in the central area by necessity, because rent is cheap or because there is no option, which indicates a high degree of satisfaction with location of the villa in the central area.¹³ This is also confirmed by the fact that 70% of the sample (71 people) said they liked to live in the tenements where they lived, while only 25% of the residents (26 people) said they did not like or detested there was still a very small number, of 5% of the residents (5 people) considered more or less.⁹

Final considerations

The survey reveals that the tenements are a reality, becoming a housing alternative for various social groups in the port area, and should be visible and recognized by municipal public authorities, through the regulation of tenements, as occurred in São Paulo, where legislation regulates the operation of room rent.¹⁰ It sought to deconstruct current perception, which stigmatizes these spaces as precarious and marginal, showing that tenements are marked by a great heterogeneity of housing conditions and social groups,¹⁴ unified in their demand to live in the central area. The recognition of this diversity of housing conditions and the heterogeneity of social groups living in the tenements indicates the need for public policies that consider the plurality of situations. Families with children cannot live in a room and it is necessary to think of housing alternatives that satisfy their social reproduction needs with dignity. However, for other social groups identified here, the tenements can be a good alternative,¹⁵ provided that the quality requirements of this form of housing are established and guaranteed, with a minimum standard of living conditions, which include the minimum size of the room, the requirement of windows, the limit in the sharing of rooms, regular and quality access to the water supply network, collection of sewers and electric light, the operating infrastructure of tenements such as bathrooms and kitchens in sufficient quantity and quality, rental contracts and affordable prices for the low-income population.¹⁶

The occupations carried out by a large part of the inhabitants of these tenements, coupled with their housing conditions, also allow for some ideas formulated by Castel in his discussion of the

⁹The real names of the residents cited in this report have been altered to preserve their identities, while maintaining all other information as reported by them.

¹⁰For this answer the universe of the sample was 102 people, considering that three people did not answer this question.

“wage crisis”.¹¹ To what extent, the invisibility of slums not feed the establishment of a ‘periphery prec will laugh “ within the centrality of Rio de Janeiro. Inspired Castel¹¹ it may be said that the reproduction of the periphery Acc express would in hives should be interpreted simultaneously from several processes:

- a) The “destabilization of the stable”
- b) The “installation in precariousness”;
- c) In the social and spatial “deficit of places” offered to the popular classes.

In any case, the set of public policies designed for tenants should have as their central strategy the guarantee of the right of these populations to the central area of the city. As we have seen, what unifies the diversity of situations is the demand for centrality. In view of the invisibility of tenement houses in the housing area diagnosis and the absence of proposals in the Housing Plan of Social Interest of the Port Area, it is also necessary to review this plan so that this type of housing is recognized, and that proposals that make slums a decent housing alternative in the Port region.¹¹

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Conflicts of interest

The author declares that no conflict of interest exists in publishing this article.

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¹¹In 1991, the city of São Paulo promulgated Lei Moura (Municipal Law 10,928 / 1991), by which the tenements were recognized as a form of housing, establishing the minimum conditions to guarantee their habitability. With the Lei Moura was instituted the obligatory register of the slums in the city, which allowed the work of inspection of the city hall. Since then, other decrees and laws have been published, aiming at the regulation and application of the law: Decree 30.731, of November 12, 1991; Law 11,945 / 1995; Law Roberto Gouveia (State Law 9,142, of March 9, 1995). In general, São Paulo legislation recognized the organizations of tenant dwellers, established rights and sanctions, and created financing mechanisms through which landlords could make the necessary improvements in real estate, in order to comply with the requirements of the law . Finally, the São Paulo legislation also instituted interventions in tenements as a possibility within the scope of its housing policy.