

Historical Scenes between New and Old Scenarios: A Rereading of the Manguinhos Community through Photographs and Texts

Danielle de Almeida Carvalho, Rosália Maria Borges de Oliveira, Sérgio Rabello Alves

Abstract— This article is the result of a survey carried out in the territory of Manguinhos, a neighborhood in the northern part of the city of Rio de Janeiro traditionally composed of communities, or the name that its inhabitants like to refer to slums. The photos, taken in the year 2017, show the living conditions that its residents face every day, with their ills and precariousness. Manguinhos is a place marked by social inequalities and the vulnerability of its resident population that lacks all types of infrastructure and that their housing conditions are, in most cases, inadequate and/or with a high home density. Its main sociopolitical characteristic is to be composed of what officially is called "aglomerados subnormais", where living conditions are quite precarious, having the fifth worst HDI among all the others 126 neighborhoods of Rio de Janeiro city evaluated by IBGE (2010) and IPP (2010). However, the records show that real people live there, who suffer, in addition to all the housing, infrastructure and leisure problems, a lot of neglect by the public authorities and a lot of preconception from society.

Index Terms— Manguinhos, Needy communities, Photographs, Social inequality, Slums, Territory, Vulnerability.

1 INTRODUCTION

MANGUINHOS has a population of approximately 36 million habitants (about 40% are children or adolescents according to the IBGE center in 2010) and is a neighborhood located in the municipality of Rio de Janeiro [1]. However, what makes this neighborhood a place that does it attract the attention of researchers from the Oswaldo Cruz Foundation?

Like all communities of Rio de Janeiro, Manguinhos is a place marked by social inequalities and the vulnerability of its resident population. Its main socio-political characteristic is to be composed of subnormal agglomerations (official definition of IBGE), where living conditions are quite precarious, with the fifth worst HDI among the one hundred and twenty-six neighborhoods evaluated by IBGE (2010) [1] and by IPP (2010) [2], in Rio de Janeiro city.



Figure 1: Manguinhos, Rio de Janeiro (RJ): precarious living conditions (Photo by Danielle Carvalho, 2017)

2 A LOOK AT MANGUINHOS (RJ)

A good number of the residents of Manguinhos live in precarious and degrading conditions, amid trash, open dumps, lack of an efficient sewage network, the presence of harmful animals, diseases such as hepatitis, leptospirosis and intestinal infections, among other problems that populations in situations of extreme poverty experience. Manguinhos is the neighborhood with the highest percentage of permanent private households with inadequate waste collection in the municipality of Rio de Janeiro (10.8%), either due to the collection trucks difficulty to access some locations in the community, made up of alleys, either by the simple neglect of the overcrowding of the existing (few) waste containers. The containers can be seen overcrowded, there are many irregular deposits in open fields and the recreation places are constantly with

Danielle de Almeida Carvalho, PhD Student, Program in Public Health and Environment in Sergio Arouca National School of Public Health, Oswaldo Cruz Foundation, Ministry of Health. E-mail: danny@ensp.fiocruz.br

Rosalia Maria Borges de Oliveira, Technologist in health and environmental sanitation department, Sergio Arouca National School of Public Health, Oswaldo Cruz Foundation, Ministry of Health. E-mail: rosalia@ensp.fiocruz.br

Sérgio Rabello Alves, Technologist in Center for the Study of Occupational Health and Human Ecology, Sergio Arouca National School of Public Health, Oswaldo Cruz Foundation, Ministry of Health; Secretaria of Civil Police of Rio de Janeiro State. E-mail: sergio.rabello@fiocruz.br

a large waste amount [1,2].



Figure 2: Manguinhos, Rio de Janeiro (RJ): deficiency in the collection of urban trash (Photo by Danielle Carvalho, 2017)

A quick walk through the community and it is already possible to see the changes by eleven years of the “Programa de aceleração do crescimento” (Growth Acceleration Program) - PAC - promoted by the federal government and still remains incomplete. The elevation of the railway line (adored by some and hated by others) and the construction of the Parque Linear (which never ended) are the two projects most criticized by residents of the region. The construction time and the result show that the project was poorly designed, managed and carried out.

Before the PAC, the houses were separated from the railway line only by a wall that was constantly broken - "through holes". Many fatal accidents occurred in these clandestine passages, in addition to the exposure of residents to noise and vibrations caused by passing trains.

However, the residents of the region do not fully agree with the statement “the elevation of the railroad has only brought benefits”. For the residents, the elevation of the railway line and the construction of the Parque Linear caused a great disruption in daily life, in addition to the enormous expenditure of public money that could have been used in other projects that would bring a greater benefit to the population residing in the region. Regarding the “risk of accidents”, there are only two traffic lights along the entire length of the railway line, which is considered insufficient by those who live and work in the region.



Figure 3: Manguinhos, Rio de Janeiro (RJ): Elevation of the railway line at the height of the Manguinhos train station (Photo by Danielle Carvalho, 2017)

The Parque Linear project was not completed until the end. I could see today, 2019, an increasing number of wooden and cardboard shacks, without sanitation and without security, appearing every day under the railway line. An important geographical change, not necessarily positive, that PAC Manguinhos left as a legacy for the region.



Figure 4: Parque Linear de Manguinhos (RJ): precarious and irregular buildings and housing (Photo by Danielle Carvalho, 2017)

On the occasion of these photos, I visited the community with a friend who lived there. I was instructed not to go alone as walking and taking pictures by myself, it could be dangerous. At one point we arrived at the bike path, another PAC project. I asked for people about the real use of that kind of space in that region. They answered that it was more of a useless construction. Residents did not use that space as a bike path. It was abandoned, useless and deteriorated.

Another expenditure of public money in the construction of a poorly sized project, with dubious utility, underutilized and with insufficient or no maintenance at all. The construction project for the Via Canal (as the bike path is called) was intended to be a bike path for circulation and leisure of the population. However it was built bordering the Canal do Cunha without any prior consultation with the population, adds up that is in terrible condition, not serving as a safe alternative to improve local or recreation. At various points I could observe the deterioration of the space, with the presence of open sewage, animals, broken lighting and without any use to the community.



Figure 5: Manguinhos, Rio de Janeiro (RJ): Via Canal (Photo by Danielle Carvalho, 2017)

Another important legacy of PAC Manguinhos was the construction of Via Binário Manguinhos. For that, the Jacaré River was channeled in a part of its stretch and houses were removed and streets were “created” or expanded, with the objective of improving the water flow and ventilation. But, as in several other PAC Manguinhos projects, the works have not been completed. Today it is possible to see new constructions appearing where the old ones were demolished. The space for water drainage and ventilation decreases with each new construction that comes up and with each heavy rain, a new flood happens even where it was not before, and it got worse in places where floods were already a problem. A resident told me about a flood when the water flow reached more than 1 meter high on the wall of his room, that would easily take a person. The wooden buildings around the river make the situation even worse.



Figure 6: Manguinhos, Rio de Janeiro (RJ): irregular constructions along the Rio Jacaré (Photo by Danielle Carvalho, 2017)

But it is possible to see positive changes in some regions of space. As the meeting point of the Jacaré River with the Faria-Timbó Canal, which was a large open waste dump, it was transformed into a public leisure area.



Figure 7: Manguinhos, Rio de Janeiro (RJ): meeting point of the Jacaré River with the Faria-Timbó Canal, before and after the PAC (Photo by Danielle Carvalho, 2017)

Another space, that really caught my attention, was the Civic Center. Inaugurated in 2009, it consisted of a large square with gardens and lawns, a public sidewalk and had structures such as rain drainage, water supply, sewage, paving and lighting. It had 8 public services spaces: Water Park/Gym; Park Library; Youth Reference Center; Legal Support Center; Income Generation Center; Emergency Care Unit (UPA); renovation of the Colégio Luiz Carlos da Vila (State School) and Woman’s house.

It is very sad to see how abandonment is a space idealized to be a complex, perfect and very useful community space for the population living there. A point of support that could help in a number of ways a portion of the population long forgotten by the government.

Visiting the community in 2017 I could see that the Parque Library was closed, homeless people and drug users “lived” at its entrance, power cables were on display and a large trash dump existed on its side. The Colégio estadual Luiz Carlos da Vila (State School) was renovated with the promise of being a teaching model, it was unrepaired and had a trash dump on its back door; the space used by Casa da Mulher (Woman’s house) was abandoned, invaded and looted, transformed into

an improvised barbershop and its surroundings are used by street people and drug users. Even to photograph I had to be careful and do it from a distance. The Water Park/Gym has been walled and the pool is a dump and has standing water.



Figure 8: Parque Library, Manguinhos Civic Center, Rio de Janeiro (RJ) - (a) Front of the library - Closed; (b) Side of the Library with trash dump and the abandoned army building; (c) Power cables on display and (d) Entrance to the back of the abandoned library with trash and the presence of drug users and homeless people (Photo by Danielle Carvalho, 2017)



Figure 9: Colégio Estadual Luiz Carlos da Vila, Manguinhos Civic Center, Rio de Janeiro (RJ) (Photo by Danielle Carvalho, 2017).



Figure 10: Woman's house, Manguinhos Civic Center, Rio de Janeiro (RJ) (Photo by Danielle Carvalho, 2017).



Figure 11: Water Park/Gym, Manguinhos Civic Center, Rio de Janeiro (RJ); (a) Swimming pool and (b) walls built around the water park (Photo by Danielle Carvalho, 2017).

Another legacy of PAC Manguinhos was the construction of new housing estates (in questionable quantity and quality) in places where previously there were communities with wooden and masonry constructions, without sanitation and without security. Countless fires and floods that previously occurred frequently have ceased to exist, however little has changed in relation to (in)security and there are countless reports of the delivery of unfinished apartments with low infrastructure.

I visited three housing estates: the DESUP Housing Complex, the Embratel Housing Complex and the CCPL Housing Complex. A quick walk through the DESUP Housing Complex and it was already possible to notice the absence of Waste collection company "orange" waste containers, a lot of scattered trash, lack of maintenance in the buildings, and a lot of trash inside and outside the containers the only trash containers available can be seen on the spot.



Figure 12: DESUP Housing Complex, Manguinhos, Rio de Janeiro (RJ), (a) shows the Housing Complex and (b) view from the fifth floor of one of the condominium buildings (Photo by Danielle Carvalho, 2017).

We walked towards the Embratel Housing Complex. The housing units of “Conjunto Embratel” were intended for families that were relocated from their homes because of the PAC Manguinhos works. However it was possible to observe many apartments with “draws” and balconies with railings, adds up the absence of waste containers for collection, precariousness public lighting and lack of policing. The main grid of the condominium was knocked down in some points and in poor condition in other points.



Figure 13: Embratel Housing Complex, Manguinhos, Rio de Janeiro (RJ), (a) front of the condominium to Rua Leopoldo Bulhões, (b) Condominium park, without maintenance and with a lot of trash (Photo by Danielle Carvalho, 2017).

The last Housing Complex we visited was the Housing Complex Nova CCPL. Among the three housing developments that we visited, Nova CCPL is the one that is in the best maintenance conditions. The buildings are well maintained, the streets are clean and Waste collection company containers are strategically distributed along the street. The main street is wide and paved. The unoccupied green spaces are clean and free of irregular buildings, homeless people and/or drug addicts.



Figure 14: Nova CCPL Housing Complex, Manguinhos, Rio de Janeiro (RJ), (a) Bicycle lane, (b) central street (Photo by Danielle Carvalho, 2017).

3 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The PAC Manguinhos has caused, in its eleven (11) years of construction, many changes in the region; however, the region still lacks any type of infrastructure. Informal occupations (shacks) in places near the canal and rivers suffer from constant flooding with material losses and disease incidence increasing, and also cause flooding in other regions because the project reduced natural rainwater drainage.

The excessive demographic density, lack of infrastructure, absence of vegetation, a confused urban morphology with serious problems of accessibility, the precariousness of its architectural typology, the absence of sufficient income to guarantee the necessary investments to household maintenance, all this contributes to the perpetuation of inadequate housing conditions with high home density [3].

However, that experience made me realize that there are real people there. They suffer, in addition to all the housing, infrastructure and recreation problems, a lot of disregard for the public authorities and a lot of prejudice from society in general. People like you and me, who struggle in their daily lives for better living conditions, for more security, for more recognition.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The authors wish to thank the financial support of Conselho Nacional de Desenvolvimento Científico e Tecnológico (National Council for Scientific and Technological Development) - CNPq, Programa de Apoio à Pesquisa Estratégica (Program for Support to Strategic Research) - Papes VI/ENSP/Fiocruz (Project N° 407753/2012-5), Programa de Desenvolvimento e Inovação Tecnológica em Saúde Pública (Program of Development and Technological Innovation in Public Health) - PDTSP/TEIAS/Fiocruz facilitating the execution of this work and the support of Faperj, Process No E-26/201.028/2017.

References

- [1] IBGE. Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística. Ministério do Planejamento, Orçamento e Gestão. Censo Demográfico 2010. Aglomerados subnormais - Informações territoriais. Rio de Janeiro (RJ): IBGE, p. 1 - 251, 2010
- [2] IPP. Instituto Pereira Passos. Secretaria Municipal de Urbanismo. Prefeitura Municipal da Cidade do Rio de Janeiro. Breve relato sobre a formação das Divisões Administrativas na Cidade do Rio de Janeiro de 1961 a 2010. Armazém de Dados. Maio, 2010.
- [3] AMARAL, Luís C. P. do. Dissertação (Mestrado em Saúde Pública), Escola Nacional de Saúde Pública Sergio Arouca, Fundação Oswaldo Cruz. Rio de Janeiro. 2006.

IJSER