

## *Review Article*

# Institutional enclaves as spatio-temporal intervals in the fabric of the expanded city

Juliana Sicuro\*

Department of Urbanism Post Graduation Program, Federal University of Rio de Janeiro, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

Received: 02-Sep-2022, Manuscript No. AJGRP-22-55152; Editor assigned: 05-Sep-2022, Pre QC No: AJGRP-22-55152 (PQ); Reviewed: 19-Sep-2022, QC No: AJGRP-22-55152; Revised: 26-Sep-2022, Manuscript No: AJGRP-22-55152 (R), Published: 05-Oct-2022

This study will present a category of space-the “institutional enclaves”-as intervals in the fabric of the city of Rio de Janeiro to shed light on the possibilities of interaction between urban form and collective social practices in contemporary urban contexts. To this end, we will use the paradigmatic case of the plot of the current Nise da Silveira Municipal Institute (IMNS), former psychiatric colony of Engenho de Dentro, in Rio de Janeiro. Parallel to this approach, we also seek to understand it as a gap in the experience of the city in which resides a potential for the production of other typologies of public spaces.

**Key words:** Institutional enclaves, psychiatric institution, institutional spaces, real estate market

## INTRODUCTION

The term enclave has its origins in political geography and designates a territory whose geographical borders lie entirely within the boundaries of another territory. It is appropriate as a concept in the social sciences and it has been acquiring broader meanings recently. We can understand an enclave as a spatial instance that establishes itself with efficient boundaries for its needs of isolation and control, taking a set of formal configurations compatible with such needs.

The space of Nise da Silveira Municipal Institute (IMNS), proposed here as a case study, results from the implementation of a psychiatric institution in the outskirts of the city in the first decade of the twentieth century. This space corresponds to a spatiotemporal interval in the occupation since, due to its specific purpose, it kept a portion of land from the intense parceling promoted by the urban expansion throughout the twentieth century. Today it presents itself as an “exceptional figure” or a “void” when seen in contrast to the densely inhabited neighborhood that makes up its immediate surroundings (Figure 1).



**Figure 1.** Aerial view of the IMNS lot with immediate surroundings. (Diagram over Google Earth image. Source: Juliana Sicuro).

\*Corresponding author. Juliana Sicuro, E-mail: [juliana.sicuro@fau.ufrj.br](mailto:juliana.sicuro@fau.ufrj.br).

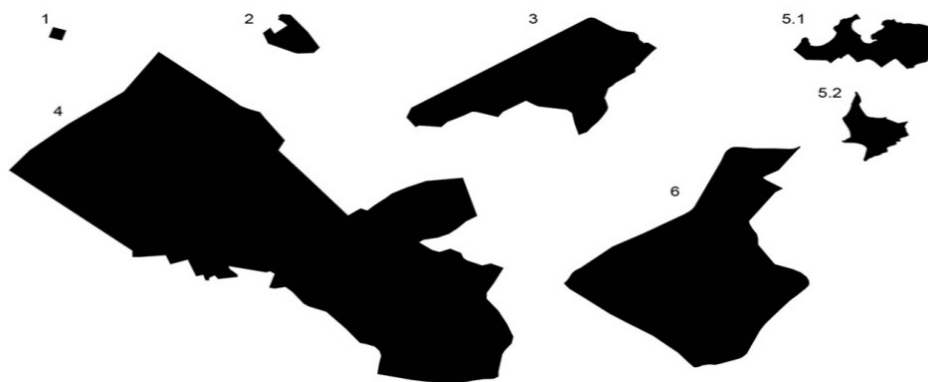
## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Institutional enclaves in the expansion of the city of Rio de Janeiro

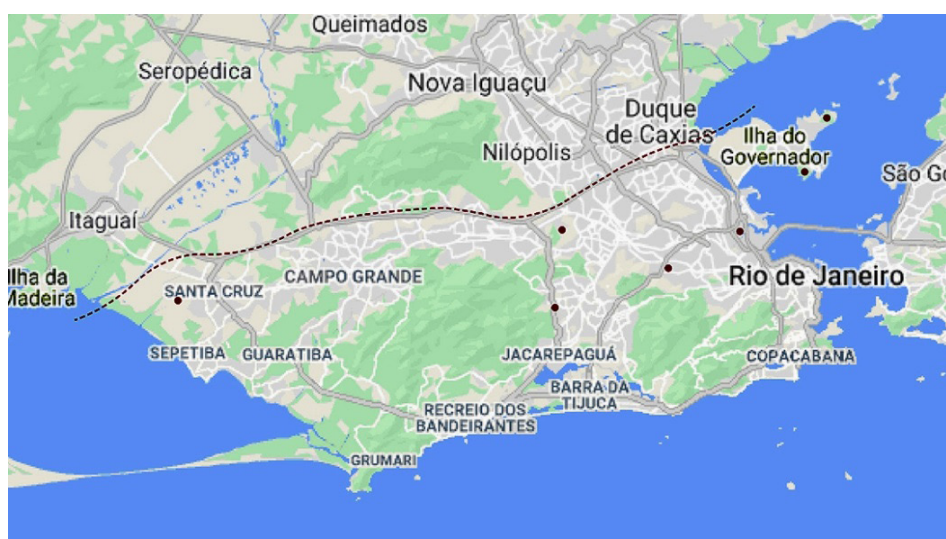
When analyzing the first records of the sparse peripheral occupations in the first decades of the twentieth century through cadastral plans and aerial photographs, we find other institutional spaces that were also established in the periphery of Rio de Janeiro before the horizontal growth of the city, and whose basic program also relates to the idea of isolation (Abreu, 2013). These are health facilities associated with the treatment of mental or infectious diseases and military areas for the army, navy, or air force. Although all these institutional spaces are located within municipal boundaries, they were intentionally positioned “outside the city,” in rural or urban parishes with low population density. The sense of “outside,” which refers to the idea of “extramural,” is related to an intention to segregate certain programs from urban social life. “Madness,” infectious diseases, and the military defense apparatus were being pushed outside the city (Panerai, 2013).

The dynamic of moving “undesirable” programs away from the consolidated urban center—from prisons to infrastructure and industries—is not a specificity of Rio de Janeiro. However, one particularity is the fact that Rio de Janeiro became the seat of the Portuguese court and, later, the capital of the Republic. This political-administrative protagonism establishes a strong relationship with the investments in public health equipment and with the fact that the city became the headquarters of a large part of the national military apparatus.

It is possible to identify other situations in which, similarly to Colonia do Engenho de Dentro, the establishment and permanence of these enclaves resulted in the preservation of a fragment of the spatial configuration preceding urbanization. By observing them through the variable of time, we can see that they became exceptional figures once this peripheral territory was incorporated into the fabric of the city. In other words, it is in the friction with the urban fabric that the limits of these institutional spaces are constituted or consolidated (Figures 2 and 3).



**Figure 2.** Comparison of areas 1. IMNS (9 ha); 2. Fiocruz (66.5 ha); 3. CJM (731 ha); 4. Deodoro military area (4,011 ha); 5.1. Marine area Ilha base dos fuzileiros (240 ha); 5.2. Marine area Ilha IPQM (108 ha); 6. Zeppelin hangar (1,544 ha). (Source: Juliana Sicuro).



**Figure 3.** Location of the enclaves that make up the above comparison of areas in the municipality of Rio de Janeiro. Diagram based on Google Maps. (Source: Juliana Sicuro)

## The inverted city: voids and public space

The urban fabric is the materialization of the circulation system of a city. We can understand it as an important instrument of urbanization because its regularity allows for the metric agility of land division and, consequently, of the commercialization of the urban soil created, facilitating the rapid occupation of previously non-urban territories. The instrumental use of the urban fabric for the “conquest” of new territories can be observed in diverse contexts and moments in the history of urbanism, from the expansion of the city of Barcelona in the nineteenth century guided by the Cerdà Plan, for example, to the recent production of peripheral urban territories through extensive residential allotments.

Regarding the “voids in the fabric,” or the figures that stand out from them, we can note that from the mid-nineteenth to the early twentieth centuries cities such as New York, Buenos Aires, and Chicago—among others—developed according to urban plans that reserved un-built areas for public spaces of leisure and conviviality. Buenos Aires is also a clear example of how planning anticipated the growth of the modern city by defining a set of public parks before the process of expansion and land parceling intensified, as Adrián Gorelik explains in his book *The Grid and the Park* (Gorelik, 2016).

What we can observe in the landscape of contemporary cities is the opposite situation from the aforementioned contexts: the voids that are being produced are, to a great extent, identified with the concept of “terrain vague” (Sola Morales, 2002). These are “residual” or “interstitial” fragments produced by political and economic forces that do not exercise a social function. In the Brazilian context, the expression “urban voids” (Borde, 2006) becomes a category used to identify lots that remain vacant for a certain period due to obsolescence or displacement of uses in the city. Usually located in central areas or port and industrial regions, these lots often become reserves for the real estate market.

The institutional spaces identified as exceptional figures in the urban fabric of Rio de Janeiro are not planned voids such as the parks in New York and Buenos Aires, nor are they abandoned or underused areas. We can say that these figures were produced in an unplanned way, since the institutions

are established without the explicit intention of preserving a void. This condition is a consequence of a process alien to the enclave itself. Despite being the result of distinct processes, the parks of the expanded city of Buenos Aires are morphologically similar to the institutional enclaves of Rio de Janeiro. Given this similarity found through urban form, could we think of institutional enclaves as potential promoters of urban environmental quality and as catalysts of collective life?

### A “nameless space” in *engenho de dentro*

Today, the lot of the Nise da Silveira Municipal Institute corresponds to one of the few green areas of the neighborhood of Engenho de Dentro and of the entire region of Grande Méier, consisting of this and seventeen other neighborhoods (Hertweck, et al. 2013). The 300 by 300 meters lot is equivalent to approximately four blocks of the surrounding area and is an exception in its context. While the block pattern of the neighborhood is essentially characterized by small residential and commercial plots, the IMNS is organized around a different spatial order in which the buildings are laid out as a system of “loose pieces” connected by paths in a large, predominantly unbuilt, mostly green lot with a clearly defined perimeter (Figure 4).

From the outside, for those walking on the streets surrounding the lot, what can be seen is dense vegetation behind the walls and railings that enclose the complex. From the inside, a different landscape is revealed. The winding paths that connect the partially abandoned hospital buildings, the shade of the trees, and the Serra dos Pretos-Forros massif in the background are some of the elements that compose this scenario.

We could identify the morphological figure found in Engenho de Dentro as a “block-park”, however, we know that it is not exactly neither a “block” nor a “park”. It is not a private lot, since it is a public property that houses public equipment, nor is it a public space in its full sense since it is not accessible to the various inhabitants of the city. Therefore, we can say that this situation found in Rio de Janeiro escapes, in a certain way, the traditional typological and programmatic classifications of the field of urbanism. It is the impossibility of framing this object that makes it particularly valuable for research (Figures 5 and 6).



**Figure 4.** Figure ground map showing the exceptional figure resulting from the implementation of the institutional enclave of IMNS. (Source: Juliana Sicuro).





**Figure 5.** The IMNS lot seen from the outside. (Image taken from Google Street View, Joaquim Serra Street).



**Figure 6.** The IMNS lot seen from the inside. (Photograph: Juliana Sicuro).

### **Enclave X Park: the emergence of a public space**

Located in the North zone of the city of Rio de Janeiro, Engenho de Dentro is characterized as a predominantly residential neighborhood with local commerce, services, and the presence of notable facilities including the João Havelange Stadium (with capacity for 46 thousand people), the Train Museum (located in the area of the former railway workshops), and the IMNS itself (Cruz, 2016). The neighborhood is also marked by the presence of the railway infrastructure, which divides it into two sections, and by Linha Amarela, a highway built in the 1990s to connect the North region and the center of the city to the West zone, perforating the Tijuca Massif.

When we talk about this urban locality we are talking about a former railway district of the so-called carioca suburb (Fernandes, 2011). Although not at the center of public investments in quality of life and not a part of the city's tourist circuit, the suburb is widely integrated into urban dynamics. In this sense, Engenho de Dentro is not identified with the idea of periphery today. However, in the mid-nineteenth century this region corresponded to an expansion zone of the city where

the sugar mills, which had motivated its first occupation, were being replaced by industrial activity. The area was gradually leaving its condition of city edge and being incorporated into a properly urban dynamic.

It is in the first decade of the twentieth century that the Colonia de Mulheres Alienadas do Engenho de Dentro (Colony of Alienated Women of Engenho de Dentro) is established there. Since then, the Colony gave way to a mental asylum, then to a Psychiatric Hospital, and today to a Municipal Institute. Despite the significant differences between these institutions, we can say that the plot of the current IMNS has been occupied for over a century by public and psychiatric institutions more or less conservative depending on the historical context and the health policies in effect, but all associated with the idea of isolation.

In recent decades, with the Psychiatric Reform and the consequent reduction in the number of inpatients, part of the buildings of the complex was emptied of hospital activities. Today, besides a set of partially deactivated buildings in a state of abandonment, we find, within the limits of the public

lot of the former Colony, a series of other non-hospital uses: two municipal Centros de Atencao Psicossocial (Psychosocial Care Centers, or CAPS), the Museu de Imagens do Inconsciente (Museum of Images of the Unconscious), and other social projects such as Trilhos Urbanos (Urban Rails), Espaco Aberto ao Tempo (Space Open to Time, or EAT), and the carnival block Loucura Suburbana (Suburban Madness). In other words, one can see the presence of uses unforeseen by the original program of the complex, demonstrating a certain capacity of adherence of this space into the territory where it is located.

It is in this emerging and ambiguous dynamic that lies the possibility of creating a significant collective space for the locality, capable of reinforcing the affective bonds of the region's population with the space and its history. However, despite a certain porosity regarding the appropriation of the spaces within the lot by unplanned uses, the complex still presents remnants of the isolated condition of its past. Besides the care with the patients that circulate inside the complex in vulnerable conditions, it is noticeable that the control of access and circulation inside the complex, as well as photography restrictions, for example, are also associated with a fear in relation to the eminent extinction of the Institute and the uncertain fate of the area. We know that, in parallel to this process of transformation in health policies, and in convergence with similar initiatives in other cities and countries, there have been recent discussions in the municipal sphere on the possibility of converting the space of the former asylum into a public park. What we observe today is, then, a potential transformation of a publicly owned and managed, albeit underutilized and controlled, institutional space into a leisure area with unrestricted access. However, this paper argues that the incorporation of these spaces into the public agenda does not necessarily mean an effective improvement in urban environmental quality, a greater democratization of the city's land, nor the promotion of significant and powerful individual and collective spatial experiences. Which elements, then, could enable the observed hybrid condition and, once manipulated, could potentialize the emerging dynamics?

#### Wall, hill, shade and museum

Contrary to the urban projects implemented by contemporary urbanism that seek to establish areas exclusively reserved for "leisure," this paper suggests the possibility of coexistence of collective dynamics of public character with existing institutional dynamics. The presence of physical elements (walls and fences) defining the boundaries of the lot can be positive attributes in maintaining these open areas as exceptional figures, protecting them from possible appropriation by the logic of urban space production promoted by the urbanism in effect (Secchi, 2012).

Besides the wall, other elements contribute to the configuration of a peculiar internal spatiality separated from the surrounding urban environment and favorable for collective leisure use. These are identified as "the hill" and "the shade," both related to the management of natural elements inside the lot. The topography of the terrain and the set of trees contribute to the configuration of a space of discovery that is more instigating to the visitor than a flat and arid lot would be in the same circumstances.

Finally, beyond the material elements responsible for establishing limits and conforming a specific ambience, the Museum of Images of the unconscious is understood as a key piece for the dynamization of non-programmed uses in the institutional lot. Its building and program (which combines health, culture, and education) already encompass a network of collective activities. This architecture could be, thus, a catalyst for a spatial and institutional transformation aiming at the preservation of qualitative spatial aspects and the incorporation of new elements capable of supporting social practices (Figure 7).



**Figure 7.** The IMNS lot seen from the inside. (Photograph: Juliana Sicuro).

#### CONCLUSION

Finally this paper points to the possibility of operating in the support or potentiation of certain preexisting configurations in order to produce other typologies of spaces for collective life. Different from the "square," the "park," or the "street" as we know them, these typologies could instead take advantage of formal configurations (or patterns) and emerging social dynamics present in contemporary contexts. The material and social reality we encounter in contemporary cities and metropolises requires a form of planning capable of reading the existing complexity-the overlapping of times and uses, the ambiguity of boundaries and working with this condition.

#### REFERENCES

1. Abreu MA (2013). The urban evolution of Rio de Janeiro. (4th edn). Rio de Janeiro: IPP.
2. Borde ALP (2006). Urban voids: contemporary perspectives. Rio de Janeiro: PROURB -UFRJ (doctoral thesis).
3. Cruz JREG (2016). From the asylum to the museum: science and art in the collections of madness. UERJ (doctoral thesis). *Museologia Patrimônio*. 9(1): 219-220.
4. Fernandes NN (2011). The ideological kidnapping of the suburb category: Rio de Janeiro 1858-1945. Rio de Janeiro: Apicuri.
5. Gorelik A (2016). The grill and the park: public space and urban culture in Buenos Aires, 1887-1936. Bernal: Universidad Nacional de Quilmes Editorial.

6. Hertweck F, Marot S (2013). The city in the city: Berlin: A green archipelago-A manifesto (1977) by Oswald Mathias Ungers and Rem Koolhaas. Zurich: Lars Müller.
7. Panerai P, Castex J, Depaule JC (2013). Urban forms: the dissolution of the court. Porto Alegre: Bookman.
8. Secchi B (2012). First Lesson of Urbanism. São Paulo: Perspectiva.
9. Solá Morales I (2002). Territorios. Barcelona: Gustavo Gili.