

RIO DE JANEIRO (BRAZIL)

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Description of sample

The city of Rio de Janeiro, cultural capital of the country, covers a total area of 1,171 square metres with a population of 5,090,700 inhabitants.

For the purpose of the present survey, not only the slum areas were considered as the lower class, but also the neighbourhoods where the working or low-income population live in the vast peripheral areas between the city of Rio de Janeiro and neighbouring municipalities (counties or boroughs). Here the division of land into small allotments has proceeded at a rapid rate - to house the incoming migrants from other states in the far northeast of the country - and many official housing schemes were developed in the late 1960s. The lower class category also includes the inhabitants of urban "villages" or *corticós* that have developed in and around the business and residential areas since the end of the last century and which have today been taken over by the *favelas* and lower class collective houses or temporary boarding houses.

Higher income areas are less conspicuous and their identification more difficult, since people from the income strata population are spread throughout the city from suburbia to the more fashionable districts of the southern sector. However, a few areas can be singled out, such as Copacabana Beach, further south in Leblon, and still further along the coastline to Sao Conrado and new developments in the recently-expanded area of Barra da Tijuca. Middle class apartment blocks spread all over the city and more are to be found in some districts in the northern sector, such as Tijuca and Grajaú.

This picture gives only a broad and rather impressionistic description of class stratification in Rio de Janeiro. The three-level division aims at providing the reader with a broader guideline as to the nature and location of the sample areas. These areas cannot include all the shades of social differentiation since they are not socially homogeneous as far as income and status are concerned.

The so-called *favelas* include human settlements with a wide assortment of characteristics, depending not only on the amount of public investment received over the last years, but also on building layout and income profiles.

For sampling purposes, areas with wide public investments and a clear improvement in the quality of life of the population - known as "urbanised slums" - will be differentiated from areas where public authorities have not invested. As regards investments, the only exception is domestic lighting - now extended to almost all the slum areas of Rio de Janeiro - which was obtained through social service programmes launched by the electric energy company.

The "invasion" (or "squatting") of unoccupied land or buildings has stimulated intense mobility of the homeless and has attracted the attention of the authorities

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and public opinion. Hundreds of families use this strategy to take possession of land or buildings, public and private. The "invasion" is either initiated by small groups whose numbers then increase, or it can start with the immediate shifting of a great number of families. These are usually monitored by an organisation: neighbours' associations, homeless people's movements or even populist political parties. Once the area is occupied, the squatters face strong opposition from neighbouring areas and often find themselves in a defenseless situation. Even when this does not happen, the condition of poverty and the need to adjust to the new environment places these families in a situation at risk.

A large part of the low income population in the metropolis of Rio de Janeiro live in *loteamentos* (parcels). According to the data provided by IPLANRIO, up until June 1987 (the most recent data available), 492 allotments were registered by the City Administration. Illegal allotments are registered separately and therefore are not included in this figure.

Housing projects which were built mostly in the 1950s and 1960s were planned to substitute the slums. However, these, in fact, became true vertical ghettos riddled with crime, prostitution and drug trafficking. These low income developments which were built and are under the formal control and administration of federal or local authorities (in other words, anonymous management) are subject to all sorts of damage and deterioration. In fact, in many cases, they have proved to be worse than the slums and have become an acute problem for social control agencies.

Finally, the group of low income families included as part of the sample were families living in "villages" or collective houses in central and southern areas.

The medium sector comprised families living in the central area of districts located in different parts of the city.

The affluent stratum was represented by families living near Copacabana Beach (a district where the highest income bracket population is concentrated, according to IPLANRIO), and families living in compounds in Barra de Tijuca - 39% of which live in housing schemes where incomes are above 20 minimum salaries.

Table 1 presents the distribution of interviews according to income, while Table 2 presents distribution by sex and age.

Data collection techniques

As scheduled, interviews for the completion of the questionnaire (in Portuguese) were carried out between 15 March and 15 June. The team consisted of 13 interviewers, all university students (5 men and 8 women) who underwent specific training. They were distributed according to the various sectors of the sample and, at the beginning, worked in pairs. In some sectors, such as the *favelas* and high-income housing compounds, previous contacts were made and agreement reached (with the association of dwellers for the first and the managers for the second) to avoid resistance and facilitate the interviewer's access to the units.

Once the first 200 questionnaires had been completed, the income level of the interviewees was checked. The design of the sample was intended to avoid departure from the pre-determined percentage of interviews by residential level in the chosen areas or sectors. The control was carried out to test the consistency of the families' income level in the selected sectors.

When the first 200 questionnaires had been collected, they were checked by the co-ordinator for accuracy and consistency. Some of the questionnaires were annulled and the interviewer was requested to return to the field and repeat the operation. Interviewers were supervised by the co-ordinators who visited the field sectors on several occasions and kept in contact with the association of dwellers in the case of *favelas* and low income sections, or with the managers of high-class housing compounds.

When 20% of the questionnaires had been completed, open questions were "closed". Whenever possible, new options were included following a revision of the questionnaires.

Response rates and re-contacting

The purpose of the registering method applied was to avoid problems of refusal and re-contacting. These obstacles were not recorded; however, they amounted to less than 2% of the total questionnaires completed (1,000). Problems were dealt with when programming data analysis and, in accordance with instructions for data entry, errors encountered were re-coded. This was meticulously done and resulted in the revision of some questionnaires. As instructed, revised questionnaires were not erased from the computer's memory, in order to be utilised in the creation of data matrices.

This, however, was not done. Therefore, although the applied questionnaires numbered 1,000, the data analysis included 1,017 cases (17 questionnaires were not re-coded). This means that the final data presents a global error of 1.7%.

Victimisation rates

Tables 3 and 4 present victimisation rates over the last 5 years and in the last year respectively. It should be noted that as far as vehicle-related crimes are concerned, the most frequent were theft from car and vandalism. A larger number of motorcycles were stolen over the last year than the average of the previous five. This could be partly due to the increase in their numbers and to their wider use because of the high cost of automobiles.

On the other hand, robberies and theft of personal objects were more frequent than burglaries or attempted household burglaries.

Sexual offences show a percentage of 11.8% of the total number of females interviewed, but this data must be employed with a certain measure of moderation given the usual secrecy around an issue which is still considered to be exposed to public censorship. As regards the predominance of certain crimes, apart from stolen motorcycles over the last year, there is no significant difference between the two groups (the last year and the previous 5 years). On the other hand, the theft of bicycles appears to have decreased.

Frauds against the consumer present a very high percentage (27%) although this is an issue which has only recently been brought to the attention of the population, by means of the publication and dissemination of the Special Federal Law for Consumer's Protection.

Reported crimes

Table 5 presents the percentage of crimes reported to the police. Car robberies are usually reported to the police (92%); reporting percentages for other crimes are less significant. Possible explanations for this could be that: by reporting to the police the victim obtains an affidavit - the basic legal requirement for applying to the insurance company for reimbursement; to avoid the possibility of incrimination when the stolen car is used for criminal activities; to enable the insurance company and the police to retrieve the car. Although with a lower percentage (65%), the same can be said for motorcycle theft.

In decreasing order of importance, burglary with entry ranks third among reported crimes. This may be because it involves the robbery of valuable property or possessions, such as jewels, bonds, US dollars, etc. In some cases, the loss may seriously affect the victim's fiscal status by altering his annual resources without an apparent explanation, which may call for severe penalisation from the Bureau of Federal Income.

On the other hand, car vandalism was rarely reported since it did not solicit a major reaction (0.9%).

Reasons for not reporting to the police

As Table 6 shows, the main reasons provided by the respondents for not reporting were: "the police cannot do anything"; "the police won't do anything"; "fear and dislike of the police".

It is evident that the police force in Rio de Janeiro faces a high level of discredit, as exemplified by the answer: "I don't believe in the police" which is frequently given among "other reasons".

Crime seriousness

This issue is closely related to the answers given to the question on crime reporting to the police. According to the interviewees (see Table 7) the most serious crime is car theft, probably because it directly affects the victim's patrimony.

Sexual crimes were also considered to be serious; a statement which must be explained in the light of Brazilian cultural tradition. However, the question is rather substantive and answers must be given cautious consideration.

Victim support

It is pertinent to assume that support for victims is mostly extended through the family. Public and private organisations aimed at offering support to the victims of crime are practically non-existent or are at an initial stage in Brazil. Nevertheless, it must be mentioned that penal legislation has established the obligation of victim compensation by the offender. As to formal organisations, the first and only active ones are those set up privately to protect women and children against abuse, along the lines of the protection of human rights. Answers to the specific question about the importance or achieved results of such organisations are of little significance.

Attitudes towards the police

Although relevant data are not presented here, police action is generally viewed as insufficient or deficient. The question on police efficiency received negative answers in 76.8% of the interviews, positive statements in 11.5% and "don't know" answers in 11.7%.

Fear of crime

Most of the data on this question are still being analysed, but it can be safely stated that the interviewees generally declared it was less likely that they would be victimised within their area of residence than elsewhere. As a matter of fact, interviews were mostly carried out in clearly limited areas such as slums, "squatters", lower-class housing complexes and urban allotments. In such areas, whenever adequate internal security is not provided by the state, protection is handled by the delinquent gangs themselves or by the operators of organised crime, drug trafficking, etc. This distorted and perverse "security" system performs the duty of the police and, through its own brutal means, performs the deterrence function which is usually expected of the police. Therefore, people are not afraid of being victimised in their area of residence, but are always afraid of criminal episodes when out of them. Thus, it can be assumed that the answers to that specific question cannot be considered as expressing a general situation.

Crime prevention measures

Door locks and window/door grills are the main measures adopted by the respondents to prevent criminal offences. Besides these precautions, people ask other families living nearby to watch their homes: "their neighbours watch them anyway". As in the case of the previous question, this type of answer was to be expected from the dwellers in limited and well-defined areas (where most of the interviews were carried out) where close social solidarity prevails (Table 8).

Attitudes towards punishment

The answers to this specific question show that most of the respondents consider community services (44.6%) and prison the most adequate types of punishment (36.6%). Fines were supported by a scarce 3.7%. The open nature of "other" answers (3.2%) do not allow interpretation; the percentage of "missing" answers constitute 8.2.

In analysing the answers given, the real meaning ascribed to "community services" should be questioned. It would appear that most of the respondents are not well informed about the nature of the sanction and quote the expression only by hearsay. It may also show a certain amount of tolerance towards certain types of crime, mostly those which do not affect them directly, but are aimed at victimising (kidnapping, bank robbery, etc.) other social brackets. Besides, crime in such a culture is assumed less as deviance than as a form of survival. Even when respondents opt for prison, they appear to favour - as percentages seem to show - shorter periods of confinement. It should be mentioned here that physical punishment and beatings were frequently alluded to among "other penalties".

TABLES

Table 1: Distribution of sample according to income

Low income	%
- urbanised slum	10.0
- non-urbanised slum	10.00
- allotments	18.2
- housing schemes	10.0
- "invasions" (squatters)	6.3
- "villages"/collective houses	4.9
Total	59.4
Medium income	30.2
High income	10.0
Missing	0.4
Total	100.0

Table 2: Distribution of sample by gender and age

Gender	%
Male	48.5
Female	50.7
Unknown	0.8
Total	100.0
Age	
Young (born after 1958)	33.9
Middle aged (born between 1937-1957)	48.7
Elderly (born before 1937)	17.4
Total	100.0

Table 3: Prevalence victimisation rates (5 years)*

	Victimisation rate (%)
Theft of car	6.1
Theft from car	11.3
Car vandalism	10.9
Theft of motorcycle	2.0
Theft of bicycle	8.4
(Owners)	
Theft of car	15.2
Theft from car	28.2
Car vandalism	27.2
Theft of motorcycle	18.3
Theft of bicycle	15.5
Burglary with entry	8.4
Attempted burglary	8.0
Robbery	27.7
Personal theft	24.3
Sexual incidents	11.8

Assault/threat	14.5
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* Prevalence - percentage of respondents who have been victims of a specific form of crime once or more.

Table 4: Prevalence victimisation rates (1 year)*

	Victimisation rate (%)
Theft of car	1.4
Theft from car	4.4
Car vandalism	4.0
Theft of motorcycle	0.6
Theft of bicycle	2.7
(Owners)	
Theft of car	3.4
Theft from car	10.8
Car vandalism	10.0
Theft of motorcycle	4.6
Theft of bicycle	4.6
Burglary with entry	1.4
Attempted burglary	2.4
Robbery	8.5
Personal theft	7.2
Sexual incidents	2.2
Assault/threat	4.6
Consumer fraud	27.0
Corruption	18.8

* Prevalence - percentage of respondents who have been victims of a specific form of crime once or more.

Table 5: Reported crimes

	%
Theft of car	92.0
Theft from car	18.3
Car vandalism	0.9
Theft of motorcycle	65.0
Theft of bicycle	7.1
Burglary with entry	38.4
Attempted burglary	19.5
Robbery	20.2
Personal theft	11.3
Sexual incidents	9.8
Assault/threat	11.5

Table 6: Reasons for not reporting*

	Theft of car %	Theft from car %	Car vandalism %	Theft of motorcycle %	Theft of bicycle %	Burglary with entry %	Robbery %	Personal theft %	Sexual incidents %	Assault/ threat %
Not serious enough	20.0	11.7	24.1	33.3	7.7	16.3	12.0	26.5	14.8	11.2
Solved it myself	40.0	3.2	8.3	20.0	10.3	16.3	3.4	3.4	24.1	24.8
Inappropriate for police	60.0	6.4	13.9	20.0	16.7	12.2	12.8	7.3		26.4
Other authorities		4.3	2.8	20.0	6.4		0.8	4.3		1.5
My family solved it	20.0	1.1	1.9	20.0	5.1	8.2			9.3	6.2
No insurance		3.2			1.3		0.8		1.8	
Police could do nothing		37.2	38.0	20.0	20.5	20.4	28.2	35.0	1.8	13.9
Police won't do anything		5.3	1.9		2.6		3.4	3.8	1.8	2.3
Fear/dislike police		6.4	6.5	20.0	11.5	12.2	10.7	9.0	1.8	10.8
Didn't dare		2.1	2.8		10.3	10.2	3.5	3.0	1.8	15.5
Other reasons	20.0	1.1	0.9						1.8	
Don't know		1.1					0.9	0.9		

* Percentages calculated on victims who said they had not reported the last incident of each type of crime to the police - multiple answers possible.

Table 7: Crime seriousness*

	Theft of car %	Theft from car %	Car vandalism %	Theft of motorcycle %	Theft of bicycle %	Burglary with entry %	Robbery %	Personal theft %	Sexual incidents %	Assault/ threat %
Very serious	64.5	28.7	26.1	40.0	17.8	62.8	37.2	42.5	55.7	40.5
Fairly serious	16.1	40.9	29.7	40.0	52.4	25.6	42.9	25.9	18.0	35.1
Not serious	19.4	27.0	39.7	10.0	27.4	11.6	17.4	29.2	24.6	21.0

* Percentage based on victims of specific crimes.

Table 8: Crime prevention measures*

	%
Installed burglar alarm	2.6
Installed door locks	53.0
Installed window/door grills	36.0
Maintain watchdogs	25.2
High fence	16.3
House has a caretaker	14.3
None of these	
Others	0.7
Ask somebody to watch home	31.2
Neighbours watch anyway	26.9
Possession of firearms	16.4
House is insured against burglary	7.8

* Percentages based on total sample of respondents - multiple answers possible.