

URBANISTIC POLICIES AND TERRITORY'S USE IN RIVERSIDE AREAS

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Cláudio Jorge Moura de Castilho ^{a*}

(a) PhD in Geography. Professor at the Federal University of Pernambuco, Recife (PE), Brazil.

ORCID: <http://orcid.org/0000-0003-3609-9914>. LATTES: <http://lattes.cnpq.br/0107090882082784>.

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(*) CORRESPONDING AUTHOR

Address: Rua Nova Luzitânia, 145, Várzea, Recife (PE), Brazil. CEP: 50.810-340.

Phone: (+55 81) 99955-5644.

E-mail: claudiocastilho44@gmail.com

Abstract

This article aims at elucidating the nature of used territory in urbanistical policies implemented in riverside áreas in Recife's town. Taking part in a perspective of the socioterritorial approach, the study was carried out by a comparative analysis between two different experiences in terms of territory used, in Lyon (France) and in Recife (Brazil), putting in evidence their similarities and differences. The main result of this research was to corroborate the fact that, in the first city, there are trend towards collective uses of requalified spaces located next to the main rivers, whereas, in the second, the territory use is more selective; which is due, mainly, to the historical-territorial nature inherent to each space taken into account.

Keywords: Nature, Urbanistic Policies, Riverine Areas, Lyon, Recife

Resumo / Résumé

POLÍTICAS URBANÍSTICAS E TERRITÓRIO USADO EM ÁREAS RIBEIRINHAS

Este artigo tem a intenção de elucidar a natureza do território usado nas políticas urbanísticas implementadas em áreas ribeirinhas da cidade do Recife. Inserindo-se na perspectiva da abordagem socioterritorial, o estudo foi viabilizado pela análise comparativa entre duas práticas diferentes de políticas urbanísticas de uso da natureza na cidade, as de Lyon (França) e Recife (Brasil), ressaltando suas semelhanças e diferenças. O principal resultado da pesquisa refere-se à comprovação de que, na primeira cidade, há tendência de usos coletivos dos espaços requalificados situados nas proximidades dos seus rios principais, enquanto que, na segunda, o uso é nitidamente seletivo; o que se deve, sobretudo, à natureza da formação histórico-territorial inerente a cada lugar considerado.

Palavras-chave: Natureza, Políticas Urbanísticas, Áreas Ribeirinhas, Lyon, Recife.

POLITIQUES URBANISTIQUES ET USAGE DU TERRITOIRE DANS LES BERGES

Cet article a l'intention d'élucider la nature du territoire usé dans les politiques urbanistiques mises sur place dans les berges de la ville de Recife. Il s'agissant d'une perspective liée à l'approche socioterritoriale, l'étude a été réalisée par le moyen de l'analyse comparée entre deux pratiques différentes de politiques urbanistiques de l'usage de la nature dans la ville, celle de Lyon (France) et celle de Recife (Brésil), en mettant l'accent sur leurs similitudes et différences. Le principal résultat de la recherche a trait à la constatation selon laquelle, dans la première ville, il y a une tendance à l'usage collectif des espaces réqualifiés situés aux proximités des leurs principaux fleuves, tandis que, dans la deuxième, l'usage est clairement sélectif; ce qui se doit, surtout, à la nature de la formation historique-territoriale liée à chaque lieu considéré.

Mots-clés: Nature, Politiques Urbanistiques, Berges, Lyon, Recife.

INTRODUCTION

Geography is the field of scientific knowledge that studies society through its spatial dimension (SANTOS, 1980; 1997), which is simultaneously a means and condition (LEFEBVRE, 1974) to realize human life in all aspects of its historical formation. It follows a set of interests represented by different life projects designed and implemented to achieve strategic positions during its existence in space.

Space is considered through its use, where its contents are capitalized on to serve the interests of territorial agents who are in permanent conflict. It acts as a reference, support, and condition of its own dynamic, both in the use of "natural" contents such as water, vegetation, air, and soil and culture in the permanent process of capitalist appreciation of space.

This article analyzes the territory addressed by urban policies in riverside areas in the current historical context of revaluing cities' natural elements. Fluvial waters were selected as the subject of the analysis, based on how their environs are used in urban planning policies in two cities, Recife (Brazil) and Lyon (France). The choice is mainly justified by rivers' striking presence in both cities' landscapes and urban dynamics.

Urban policies differ markedly, according to whether countries are "developed" or "underdeveloped," as well as the concrete possibilities of changes in land use to construct a citizen's space (SANTOS, 1987) and promote an effective right to the city (LEFEBVRE, 2001). Therefore, as a social instance with a process of permanent movement, territory is a fundamental category for geographic analysis. For Santos (2007, p. 14) territory

[...] is not just the set of natural systems and systems of overlapping things; [it] has to be understood as used territory, not the territory itself. Used territory is the ground plus identity. Identity is the sense of belonging to what belongs to us. The territory is the foundation of work, the place of residence, material and spiritual exchanges, and the exercise of life.

France and Brazil face a similar logic to the global historical event of globalization. However, the socio-cultural specificities of each territorial formation have led to different outcomes. Hence, a comparative analysis is essential in a dialogical approach to comprehend and learn the world's complexity and meanings in its permanent historical movement.

Given this simultaneously fragmented and articulated complexity, under a theoretical-practical rationale, the comparative method has been one of the most applied scientific procedures since Antiquity. Furthermore, comparative analysis is employed to discover regularities, perceive shifts and transformations, build models and typologies, identify continuities and discontinuities, similarities and differences, and explain the general determinations that govern social phenomena. (SCHNEIDER & SCHIMITT, 1988, p. 49) Therefore, comparative analysis is not a simple technique for collecting empirical data and information; instead, it is a broad methodological instrument capable of supporting a socio-territorial approach to the world.

According to Marc Bloch, "[...] applying the comparative method in the framework of the humanities consists [...] of seeking to explain the similarities and differences between two series of a similar nature, taken from distinct social media." The social media that Bloch refers to can be societies that are distant in time and space (this application is very [...] typical of history), or synchronous societies, neighbors in space, which have one or more points of common origin. This approach allows us to reconcile the task of theoretical elaboration with interest focused on the analysis of specific social processes. (SCHNEIDER & SCHIMITT, 1998, p. 33)

Social processes have a spatial dimension. They are located in different temporal-spatial contexts, articulated by the logic of uneven and combined historical-geographical development that privatizes and transforms everything in its path into merchandise, although this does not happen similarly in all places.

According to Brandão (2013), Milton Santos was one of the few academics who engaged with the debate about the relevance of using the comparative methodology in geography. Based on Yves Lacoste's contribution, Santos (1986, p. 15-16) states that "[...] 'the comparative procedure, one of the main assets of the geographical method, can only bear fruit when the fundamental processes and

characteristics common to the particular situations that it compares are clearly perceived." When this is the case, the conditions will propitiate understanding space as a complex totality.

Given the above, the text that follows begins by addressing the nature of the territory used in urban planning policies and then highlights the similarities and differences inherent to the territory used in Lyon and Recife, according to the socio-territorial specificities of each place. Final considerations are made about the reasoning, emphasizing some points required for an urban policy that asserts a citizen's space.

URBANISTIC POLICIES AND TERRITORY USED IN BRAZIL

In principle, urbanism as a science and practice is concerned with containing and regulating capitalism's perverse impulses, even when it maintains the prevailing relationships of domination inherent to a socio-territorial system. One example of this is the State's action as a planning agent for the territory's use.

Friedmann (1987) was skeptical about conventional State planning and defended it as a political act of collective interest that should dialogue with the socio-territorial collectivity. He understood planning as guiding society's future in the context of an efficient democratic perspective able to control and regulate the negative and willful impulses of perverse capitalism.

However, the resumption of global neoliberal principles is reconfiguring the urbanist perspective highlighted above, reducing it to purely mechanical actions legitimizing hegemonic interests. From this viewpoint, the urban policies analyzed here are defined as State actions in the urban space whose intentions, under capitalism, have become even more obscure, aiming to hide their nonpublic-selective character.

Policies are acts arising from power relationships [...] in society materialized in different forms. They are public when these actions are commanded by state agents and aimed at changing existing social relationships. Public policies are manifestations of social forces' relations in state institutions and act on different institutional fields [...], aiming to change the established social relationships. (NETTO OLIVEIRA, 2008, p. 102)

According to Franco (2001), from the urban-environmental point of view, public policies are actions implemented to stimulate the concretization of the

[...] Sustainable City, based on the principle of human-environment integration through the practice of [...] preservation, restoration and conservation by human interventions on the territory [...] and in the construction and management of urban artifacts [...], seen as human ecosystems and [...] in their complex relationships with "natural" ecosystems, as well as with the network of cities in their regional surroundings and given the globalized network. (FRANCO, 2001, p. 285)

If, on the one hand, due to the imperatives of neoliberal reason, the implementation of urbanist actions does not respect the territorialities of the subordinated classes, on the other hand, it may change this framework of references, becoming public policies when the context of socio-territorial inequalities and injustices can be changed, so that the public interest guarantees Good Living. This term refers to a perspective of value derived from Latin American experiences, specifically from Ecuador and Bolivia. Considering the revaluation of the dimension of nature as an intrinsic part of the human being, it surpasses the concept of well-being. The latter comes from large-scale European experiences in the post-World War II era, especially in countries like France, Germany, and Sweden. Thus, environmental discourse becomes a final play towards an alternative world, as, according to Freitas (2017, p. 13), "[...] when relating the issue of environmental degradation to the housing issue, two social movements that have hitherto followed parallel trajectories and often conflict with each other can be united."

Therefore, a broad conception of public policies is taken into account, which considers the

complexity of the affected territories' lived dimension. The "[...] broad conception of public policies includes the [...] integration and interaction between the different modalities of government policies [preventive, compensatory and redistributive], as well as between the different levels of government [municipal, state, federal]" (NETTO OLIVEIRA, 2002, p. 106).

Seeking to demonstrate the complexity of these actions, the author also emphasizes that "[...] public policies of a social nature must be understood historically in relation to the processes of advances and setbacks of the State's guidelines [as the main "commander" of public policies]" (Ibidem). Thus, the relations between State and market must be viewed in the scope of the clash of interests involved in the process of defining public policy.

Nevertheless, Araújo (2000) points out that one cannot fail to consider the set of difficulties inherent to the authoritarian, patrimonial, and conservative inheritance of the Brazilian State, which to some extent hinders significant advances in policies implemented in the country.

In keeping with the nature of the Brazilian State, urban policies use the territory according to parameters intrinsic to principles of Hygienics, aiming to gentrify spaces to meet the interests of the Commercial Financial Real Estate Complex (CFREC), which brings together the agents that can control the urban space production process. An alienating spatial action, Hygienics has persisted throughout the history of urban policies, demonstrating the commitment of urban management to capitalism's homogenizing interests. The intentions of "sanitizing, beautifying and ordering" urban space are, as Moreira (1992) emphasized,

[...] interconnected parts of any urban intervention project of the time [...]. Such interventions are guided by the widening and creation of great avenues (always implying demolitions), the creation of parks and gardens, and the construction and renovation of public buildings [...], in addition to a series of postures that regulate the construction, hydrosanitary disposal, and the external aspect of buildings. (MOREIRA, 1992, p. 186)

The significance of these interventions in the city's sanitation is irrefutable. They provide the infrastructure required for implementing public policies about access to drinking water, wastewater treatment, and garbage collection. Universal access to these services has, therefore, prevented the proliferation of epidemics that have often threatened human life in cities.

Hygienics is an urban medical perspective that renews its meaning in history. According to Foucault (1990, p. 89), it continually seeks to distribute individuals territorially, by placing them next to each other, while simultaneously alienating, isolating, individualizing, and watching them to scan social space, dividing and inspecting it, under a permanently controlled gaze. These intentions are associated with the capitalist valuation of spaces represented by gentrification, which is actually the central purpose of implementing current urban projects. This process takes place in areas and

[...] rehabilitated buildings and renovated apartments, that is, gentrification increasingly covers new restaurants and shopping streets in the center, riverside parks and cinemas, famous brands' towers, museums belonging to great foundations, every type of tourist spot, and cultural complexes, in short, large-scale operations in the landscape of central areas. [...] This renovation [...] represents a highly integrated conquest of urban space, in which the residential component cannot be rationally dissociated from the transformations in the landscape of employment, leisure, and consumption. (SMITH, 2006, p. 72)

Despite the contextual time-space differences, hygienics-gentrifying urban actions, encouraged by the State using the territory as an economic resource, have alienated the territories that stand in the way of the imperatives of the neoliberal reason that reinforces capitalist interests, as can be seen in the studies by Pontes (2017) and Soeiro (2017).

Although the neoliberal worldview has denied and destroyed nature, the close relationships between society and nature have never ceased to exist, inspiring their resumption, especially when there is a desire to rescue the used territories' environmental dimension.

Both abiotic nature and living things require careful reflection to achieve sustainable management. [...] Local authorities' responsibility is engaged in creating a quality environment and protecting ecosystems. [...] The

protection of nature helps develop a sense of belonging and city dwellers' engagement with the community. (VEYRET, 2006, p. 79)

Thus, these are windows of opportunity to instigate cultural changes on the need to reestablish the interrelationships between society and nature, both in thought and action to overcome large-scale problems, even though fundamental problems still have to be overcome.

The field of the urban environment is of great concern to the city's operational actors. [...] However, research teams where the geographers in this renewed context have grasped the links between the urban and the environment as the central object are rare, as if this theme were unworthy of scientific and conceptual thinking. [...] The simultaneous emergence of 'human ecology' and the institutional power of urbanism and development, which seek to constitute themselves as independent scientific disciplines, result in the specificity of geographical approaches to this theme being disqualified and their richness forgotten. (DORIER-APPRILL, 2006, p.11)

On the issue of the integration of river courses in urban policies in French cities, Veyret (2006) argues that in general, urban redevelopment processes have been reinforced through the territorial reorganization of riverside areas by actions to implement projects that enable the installation/modernization of access roads and the combination of tertiary, recreational and residential functions. Lower-income populations are replaced by more affluent ones, benefiting the real estate sector.

Agents linked to the CFREC constantly reorganize the territory used in capitalism as a resource in a contradictory and conflicting process. Corrêa (1989) maintains that urban space is simultaneously

[...] fragmented, articulated, reflexive, social conditioning, full of symbols and a field of struggle. It is a social product, the result of actions accumulated over time, and generated by agents who produce and consume space. They are concrete social agents and not an invisible market or random processes acting on an abstract space. These agents' action derives from the dynamics of capital accumulation, the reproduction needs of the relations of production, and the class conflicts that emerge from it. (CORRÊA, 1989, p. 11)

In Recife, as in other cities with similar geographical sites, conflicts take place over interests between classes that wish to reappropriate riverside areas and those that refuse to abandon them. The dominant classes use the territory to maintain interests intrinsically linked to neoliberal intentions through complex actions to conquer and appropriate the riverside areas that interest them with a view to gentrification. In contrast, the subordinated classes use the territory as protection to maintain interests linked to the world of work and, in turn, of their existence in the world.

As Elisée Réclus wrote in the nineteenth century, becoming aware of the complex nature of used territory makes it possible to think and reflect on concrete perspectives to change or, at least, to mitigate people's suffering. Otherwise, this space will remain alienated (FRÉMONT, 1999) and privatized, under the imperative of the permanent conquest of territory as an economic resource. The acceleration of this imperative occurs to overcome the land scarcity problem and favor the interests of the CFREC, which needs to continue expanding in space.

Accordingly, instead of using territory and its natural elements as a collective social right, what is evident is its privatization linked to extra-local demands guiding the various enterprises that, through State actions, use Hygienics to gentrify the spaces that support them.

The appropriation and production of nature aim to add value to these projects, linking them to an idea of "a perennially green and peaceful" nature [...]. There is a significant increase in real estate developments using "green advertising" [...]. In this way, in the city, nature is the product of man's social and historical action, which, at present, is full of capitalist intentions. There is also a concern to overcome the use of nature [...] by constructing a process of action and usage of nature as a form of collective emancipation, as a right to nature for all the city's inhabitants in the contemporary world. (HENRIQUE, 2009, p. 14)

The subordinated classes, growing in awareness that nature is not a natural or static concept, can alter the situation when they organize and mobilize to revindicate the guarantees required to assert their interests from the State and, in turn, their right to the effective, high-quality public policies that are their due.

For environmental movements, for example, "[...] territory is no longer an a priori given, like 'primordial matter.' It is a result, a production, and a collective creation". (MONGIN, 2009, p. 302)

Over this local territory, where the struggle of the place replaces the class struggle, an Insurgent City may arise, [this] is not an isolated city, a liquid and random city about to disappear at the first blow of history; the city's utopian storyline puts cities in relationships with each other. [...] The urban is a continuous collective creation, a joint project that refounds the social connection and "[the] recreator of a social imaginary" (Ibidem, p. 302-303).

In this perspective, the possibilities of environmental/spatial justice are found, bringing together authors affiliated to different ideologies on the issue, such as Leff (2009) and Bret (2017). Instead, they are heading towards the construction of a different rationale, envisioning fairer processes of used territory. If this is the case, it is not enough to rearticulate nature and society since, in reality, these two dimensions of humankind in the world are never really separate. As previously stated, environmental discourse is used to rearticulate the social struggles for the right to the city.

LYON AND RECIFE: A SIMILAR LOGIC OF USED TERRITORY, BUT TWO DIFFERENT URBAN EXPERIENCES

This section analyses the treatment of watercourses in urban planning policies in Recife and Lyon's distinct urban realities. The relationship between the city and the rivers is highlighted by the responses to two questions posed by the researcher to the users of the riverside areas after the urban renewal actions. The questions intended to find out about access to the spaces and the feeling of social acceptance from others' viewpoints in these spaces.

The comparative analysis showed that, although both cities were built according to capitalism's imperatives and, therefore, followed a similar spatial production logic, their inherent historical and geographical specificities produced differences in terms of used territory and urban policy.

Fifty interviews were carried out in Recife and forty-five in Lyon, a total of ninety-five; the limit criterion was the saturation of the responses' content. The interviews were conducted in riverside areas in both cities that had undergone urban revitalization actions.

In a quest to recover the symbiosis of society and nature, according to the historical vicissitudes of the present, the main urban actions based on the concept of territorial sustainability translate, above all, in the rehabilitation of riverine areas and the cities' afforestation, as was the case in both urbanistic projects studied here. The La Confluence Project in Lyon, was responsible for revitalizing an area that was previously used mainly for industrial and port activities. The Parque Capibaribe-Caminho das Capivaras Project (PPC-CC), in Recife, carried out actions in areas previously occupied by low-income populations, removing stilt-houses and slums.

SIMILARITIES

In the current historical context in which nature is gaining value, the dominant classes' revived interest in riverside areas views rivers as a commodity, masked by a discourse that declares them to be a natural heritage that should serve the whole urban community.

As in France, in Brazil, the process of adding value to natural assets has led to the implementation of a set of actions aimed at the reoccupation of riverside areas. The hegemonic interests represented by the CFREC reorganize the space, putting pressure on the State to facilitate the construction of luxurious residential and business condominiums, establishing the infrastructure needed for economic flows in the

city. In Recife, this usually occurs after removing the subordinated classes living in both stilt-houses and slums in those areas.

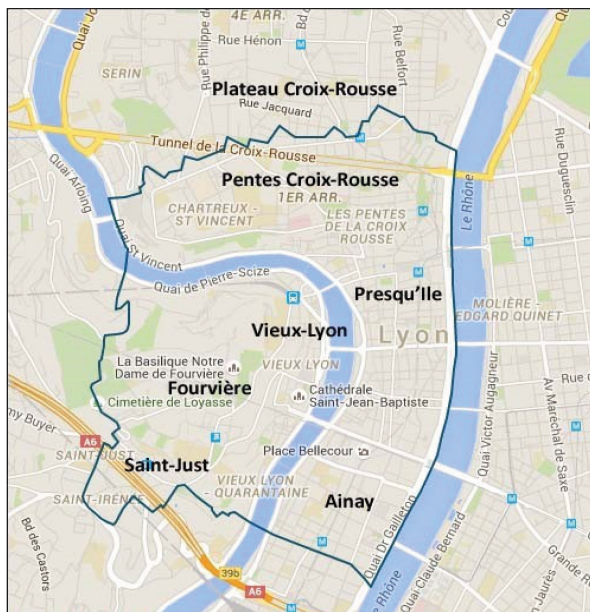


Figure 1 - Lyon. Presence of water bodies in the urban landscape. Source: author's private collection, 2019.

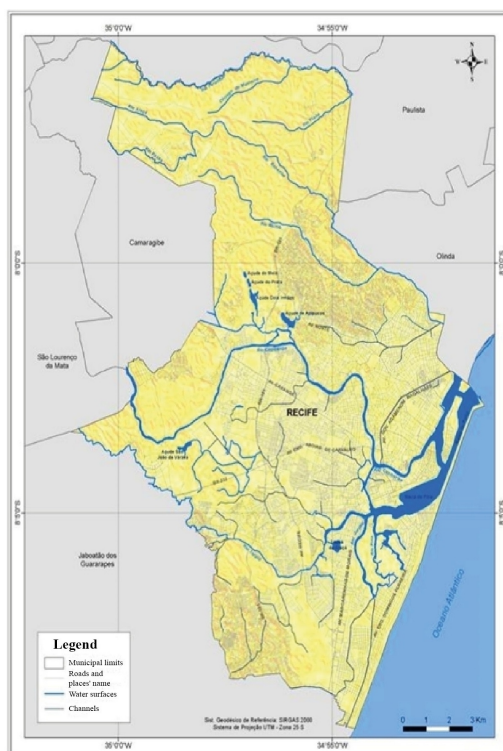


Figure 2 - Recife. Water bodies in the urban landscape.

Sources: IBGE / DGC. Continuous Cartographic Base, to the millionth - BCIM: version 4.0. Rio de Janeiro, 2014; EMBRAPA. Agroecological Zoning of the State of Pernambuco. CD-ROM. Recife, 2001. Organization: Manuela Nascimento, 2015.

Lyon (Figure 1) and Recife (Figure 2) are cities where rivers are a significant presence in their

geographical landscapes, so the problem of the interrelationships between society and nature is a notable aspect of conceiving and putting into practice urban policies in each of these places.

The first map shows the Rhône and Saône rivers, while the striking presence of the Capibaribe river can be seen in the second. Interviews were conducted with the users of those riverine areas in locations where urban renewal projects had been carried out.

Harvey (2013) emphasizes that in the process of its permanent historical development, capitalism has primarily transformed everything in its path into merchandise to generate mainly economic profit, which principally benefits society's ruling classes.

Similarly, natural goods are also transformed into commodities and privatized, accelerating the economic valorization of space in its entirety, ransacking space, and provoking territorial conflicts. This capitalist appreciation of space, in both the French and Brazilian cities,

[...] is, above all, a capital-space relationship. [...] Thus, under the hegemony of capitalist relations, space appears [...] for production as part of the value, expressed in the form of constant capital. It can be observed for any individual production that it develops occupying a certain part of the space. [...] Another relationship established between this production and space refers to it as general social capital [...]. Space, therefore, under capitalism, is capital as a condition and as a means of production. [...] Thus, the history of capitalism is, in this sense, nothing more than a historical process of increasing privatization of portions of the Earth's surface and all that it contains. (MORAES & COSTA, 1984, p. 159-160)

This process of using the territory, privatizing and transforming into merchandise everything in its way as a means and condition to generate purely economic values, is found, in a more perverse way, in the Latin American model of capitalist valorization of space, implied in

[...] the gradual impoverishment of the territories where it was established, destruction of the natural wealth without [...] adding value to the land compatible with the wealth removed. [...] Colonial territory is perceived as a "space to be won," the "civilizing" submission of a crude nature that includes indigenous populations. [...] The strength of this vision persists throughout the cultural formation of Latin American nations. Despite the existing political emancipation processes, the elites continue to regard their countries as a space to be conquered (the people are seen as an instrument of this action). [...] They act as though the territorial reserve were inexhaustible, regardless of the examples of absolute degradation of resources that the pioneer front has already left behind. (MORAES, 1997, p. 37)

The specificity of Brazilian and Latin American territorial formation has dramatically influenced the differences between the two experiences of urban planning policies studied here.

DIFFERENCES

In Lyon, the area in the heart of the city known as La Confluence due to its location at the convergence of the Rhône and Saône rivers is no longer the center of predominantly port and industrial activities; currently, it is an area described as a "smart and durable city."



Figure 3 - Lyon. Urban Rehabilitation Project in La Confluence. Source: Lyon Confluence.FR, captured on March 11, 2019.

The urban redevelopment policies were planned to comply with the environmental requirements committed to respecting the urban community's quality of life, concretizing the production of a space publicized by the government as "sober, intelligent and creative." (Figure 3)

The hypothesis that the redeveloped urban riverside areas along the two Lyonnaise rivers are used by anyone regardless of their social condition was confirmed by interpreting the areas' users' statements during field research in January 2020. People of different income levels (up to a minimum wage (MW); between one and two MW and between two and three MW) attested that: "I come here when I want to and spend as long as I want, to relax,"; "I bought this food at a restaurant up there and came to eat here on the pier [...] I also use this place to read a book and admire the surrounding landscape," "I always come here where I feel free," and "I feel terrific here, that's why I always come back whenever I want."

It is pertinent to highlight the specificities originating in the South during comparative analyses. They are essential for understanding the world as a complex totality, freeing local thinking from the tendency to adapt mechanically to impositions outside the lived territory. According to Watson (2016, p. 36), the term South goes beyond a mere geographical location.

It references an entire history of colonialism, neo-imperialism, and differential economic and social change through which large inequalities in living standards, life expectancy, and access to resources are maintained; and opens new possibilities in politics and social science. (WATSON, 2016, p. 36)

One significant example of the South's contribution to a fruitful dialogue with the North is the quest for Good Living rather than Well Being. Exploring the link between the relevance of respect for nature as a collective asset intrinsic to human life on Earth and the social struggles aiming at conquering the right to the city for all may be a productive way forward.

However, in interviews with users of different income levels (up to a minimum wage (MW); between one and two MW and between two and three MW) in revitalized areas on the banks of the Capibaribe river, there were differing replies regarding the use of the redeveloped territory. In a survey conducted in two periods of the day (morning and afternoon), there were no respondents in the first income level, one person was included in the range between one and two MW, and the number of people between two and three MW was very low. The majority of the interviewees were from the category "above three MW."

While the people belonging to the two higher income brackets told the interviewers that they use the recreation and leisure facilities in the area "when they and how they want to," the person in the income bracket between one and two MW revealed that, "despite visiting the area, she does not feel at ease" because "others look at her with suspicion." Those on higher incomes also replied: "we use the area, but we are afraid [of being attacked or robbed]." They add that "Whenever I can, I go there despite the fear of being robbed," "Due to the violence, I only come with someone else," and "If the area were more selective, there would be more people here of our level."

The content of these responses attests to the significant selectivity of the used riverside territory after its urban redevelopment in Recife, mainly resulting from the differences in terms of the socio-territorial specificities inherent to France and Brazil, as

highlighted by the comparative analysis. Finally, in places with unresolved citizenship issues, the territory is more likely to be used selectively, disregarding respect for social diversity.

The PPC-CC is notable because it encouraged social awareness and a rapprochement between society and nature by revaluing the city's relationship with the river, highlighting the importance of its conservation in the context of environmental concern. This attitude mobilized various sectors of society; however, behind the project was the dominant classes' intention to reappropriate the areas and gentrify them, obviously, after the stilt-houses and slums around the river had been removed (Figures 4).



Figure 4 - Recife. PPC-CC maquette. Source: Capibaribe Park Project, author's collection, 2015.

The maquette in Figure 4 is a three-dimensional image representing an imaginary view of the city according to the parameters of the CFREC's interests, superimposed on the territories historically used by the subordinate classes, which were intentionally "erased" in the model.

It is worth reiterating that the idea of transforming Recife into a city-park and increasing the amount of public green areas by redeveloping the Capibaribe river as a structuring axis of the city is attractive and relevant to the current moment. The problem lies in the issue of who will be entitled to this substantial "public space." The official discourse masks that there are favelas and stilt-houses in the 500m radius calculated from each riverbank (Figure 5). In previous local urban experiences, such as that of the Beira Rio Avenue (Torre neighborhood), this low-income housing was entirely removed, a harbinger of things to come.



Figure 5 - Recife. Excerpt from the navigability project area of the Capibaribe. Source: Author's collection, 2013.

As well as being omitted from the PPC-CC's publicity model (see Figure 4), the subordinate classes' territories were not mentioned in the project's managers' presentations at the beginning of the initiative. The only actors distinctly presented as supporters of the above actions are entrepreneurs,

employees linked to government institutions, and other notable civil society members.

The PPC-CC, which started in 2013, is the result of technical cooperation between the Secretariat of Environment and Sustainability (SMAS) of the City of Recife (PR) and the Federal University of Pernambuco (UFPE). According to a publicity advertisement (FOLHA DE PERNAMBUCO, 2016, p. 1), it aims to

[...] transform 30km of riverbanks in the city into a parkway, aiming to increase the rate of public green area, from 1.2 m² per inhabitant today to 20 m² per inhabitant in 2037 [...]. Of the project presented a little over three years ago, only the Jardim do Baobá, located in the neighborhood of Graças, has materialized. The concept foresees actions within a radius of 500 meters from each bank, resulting in an area of influence of 7,250 hectares. Thus, it covers 35 neighborhoods, affecting 400 thousand of Recife's inhabitants.

Residents of slums and stilt-houses along part of the Capibaribe's banks were removed, tearing a territorial fabric created through a historical process of occupation of space. Others were placed in housing developments whose architectural design did not consider their specific dwelling and living requirements. Relocated to distant areas with no access to the formal urban labor market, they had problems with new expenses, such as condominium fees, energy bills, and public transport.

It is notable that, once more, the divergences between the interests of nature preservation and social inclusion have recurred, as highlighted by Freitas (2017) when studying the urbanization process of an Environmental Protection Area in the Brazilian Federal District, who found that environmental discourse sometimes ends up being used to sustain speculative objectives.

The current conservative urban managers are pursuing Recife's society's acceptance of the PPC-CC, targeting the dominant and "middle" local classes and concealing their hygienist purpose of "cleaning" the riverside areas of the territories deemed undesirable by the CFREC. The official discourse is constructed around the waters of the Capibaribe, associated with the city's afforestation through the construction of boulevards, squares, and parks, thus excluding those social classes that should also have their right to nature guaranteed.

There is an economic revaluation of the space favoring the dominant classes; nature is privatized and denied as a good held in common by the community. Although public managers claim they are "talking to the families in stilt-houses and favelas," the representatives of entities from the riverside territories are not even mentioned by name in the project's design and discussion, unlike the companies promoting this urban action. In reality, the PPC-CC is a hygienist-gentrifying project for the city's spaces, which have been revalued by the presence of water and natural vegetation, functioning, in short, as a "pull" for the expansion of a purely economic logic of the city.

CONCLUSION

Our interest is not just the territory per se but, concomitantly and above all, used territory, based on the concept that society always uses space as both a means and a condition to its own existential dynamics in its permanent historical occurrence.

Even though under the capitalist socio-spatial system, territory is used according to its fundamental parameter as a resource for wealth generation, thus causing inequalities and injustices in all dimensions of human life, the process does not happen in the same way everywhere in the capitalist world. Therefore, the socio-territorial specificities inherent to the historical-spatial phenomenon point toward significant differences typical of capitalism in the North and South.

In this perspective, nature has become an increasingly important factor to satisfy the CFREC's interests through which capital continues to accumulate in an increasingly intense and diffuse manner. Thus, in general, the territory and its content are used to satisfy the dominant classes' interests, rejecting and alienating anything that does not immediately interest them.

A discourse is framed and disseminated, which presents itself through the need for a rapprochement between society and nature while acting as a tool to conceal the real dominant interests involved. Overall, the process is much more perverse in the realities of a country like Brazil, which is

why the research's findings were that Lyon's territory tended to be used by the urban community as a whole.

There is also a reduced perception of the Capibaribe river, that is, an attempt to "solve" the problem of a river that, before reaching Recife, passes through several other municipalities in the Agreste and Mata de Pernambuco, receiving residential, industrial, and agricultural waste.

Another significant problem is the lack of dialogue between SMAS and the other municipal departments, such as the Secretariat of Education and Social Action, which could also make an interdisciplinary contribution to such an exciting idea, reactivating the participation of civil society as a whole in the search for a more equal and equitable space.

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