



Urban spaces and their contradictions

"On the ranch deep
Way past the end of the world
Where the pain and the longing
Tell you things about the city."

Composers: Lamartine Babo and Ary Evangelista Barroso.

Addressing 'urban spaces and their contradictions' deserves an understanding of how urban spaces are being constructed on the basis of contradictions, but what contradictions could we be referring to? This epigraph of the song "No Rancho Fundo", sung by Chitãozinho and Xororó, leads us to the understanding that urban spaces, including those of large metropolises, are built through the pain and longing of the Northeasterners (*nordestinos*), who gradually experience the practice of rural exodus, that is, urban spaces emerge from the labor force of human beings who leave their territories, including the small urban centers of the interior, with the illusion that a good life is in the big city, that in the city there is work for all and quality of life, but no!

Another song that takes us back to the understanding of urban spaces and their contradictions is "Cidadão", sung by Zé Ramalho, then the 'building', which whoever built it obviously will not live in it. Just like the 'school', which the daughter wants to study, but 'a child with his feet on the ground, here she cannot study'. This is the right to education denied. Only the church is the urban space, which in the song, the citizen can enter. The spaces are neither democratic nor inclusive, the nomenclatures separate, center/periphery, interior/capital, the values are in place, as well as the socioeconomic conditions as well.

In this way, we understand that the adversities in the metropolises are inherent to the contradictory processes that exclude the subjects from their fields to the city, as well as from their own city, the dubiety posed. In this sense, we also do justice to the citizen's song, which states:

"That pain hurt the hardest
Why did I leave the North?
I started to tell myself
There the drought was punishing
But the little that I planted
I had the right to eat."
Composer: Lucio Cardoso.

Consequently, the sweat of the work of the Northeasterners in the urban space is not enjoyed by them. Unlike the citizen who lives in the countryside, what is planted is harvested and eaten by him. The right to food is guaranteed. It is important to emphasize



that the beauties of urban spaces and tourist spots, especially of Brazilian capitals in particular and of the world in general, are spaces enjoyed by the middle class and the elite. In other words, urban spaces in their contradictions are mutually exclusive. How to democratize urban spaces? So that all citizens can enjoy basic, fundamental and inalienable human rights, such as health, leisure, education and security, for example. We don't have an exact answer to give, but we can mobilize reflection on the need to democratize urban spaces so that citizens can experience the freedom to come and go.

Urban spaces are complex, hence the contradictions. The occupation of urban spaces is often disorderly, thus causing the burial of mangroves and lagoons, causing subsidence in the city, until their disappearance. The megalopolis constructions are in themselves contradictory because they even expel the inhabitants of their territories. The movie "Narradores de Javé", directed by Eliane Caffé, represents well the contradiction of an enterprise to the detriment of the culture, identity and memory of a people, of their belonging to the place.

Well, there are many contradictions of urban spaces that we can identify through songs, movies and documentaries. As a documentary, we have the "Documentary on subsidence of the soil", produced by the Argentine Carlos Pronzato, who has lived in Brazil since the 90s. The documentary tells the story of families who lost their properties because of the cracks caused by rock salt extraction (G1, 2024). In particular, in this documentary, we see the contradiction of how much Braskem caused damage to the city of Maceió in the name of development. But development for whom? For the residents who lost their homes, it certainly isn't!

Faced with this reality, urban spaces are by nature contradictory. Thus, we point out that the set of things said and written that make up the current volume serve to deepen the epistemic in the enunciative developments that constitute the scansion of the discourse on urban spaces and their contradictions.

We invite you, the reader, to delve into the themes that permeate the understanding of how contradictions in urban spaces are being constructed.

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