RESEARCH ARTICLE　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　**OPEN ACCESS**

URBAN SPACE PRECARIZATION: SPATIAL ASPECTS AND THE CHARACTERIZATION OF VIOLENCE IN THE CITY OF BELÉM/PA

*1Antonio Cleison de Souza Costa, 2Clay Anderson Nunes Chagas and 3Roberto Magno Reis Netto

1Master's Student of the Postgraduate Program in Geography, Federal University of Pará; 2Doctor Professor of the Postgraduate Program in Public Security, Federal University of Pará; 3Doctor Student by the Postgraduate Program in Geography, Federal University of Pará

ABSTRACT

The Brazilian urban context, especially of the cities located in the Amazon region, shows that they went through an intense urbanization process that contributed to the expansion of metropolitan regions and the precariousness of their respective peripheries, which were associated with unequal soil access. Or rather, it is, however, with the same elements that reproduce and consolidate the unequal social structure itself. In fact, the objective is to understand the complexity of the violence registered in the city of Belém, in which it was accentuated with the socio-spatial fragmentation and, consequently, the precariousness of peripheries. Under such considerations, it is important to consider that the incident variables on it, which are not always local nor visible, depend on a deeper analysis of the complexity that is not always easy for the observer to notice. On used methods, we chose the collection of qualitative data and written production, which was built with a wide bibliographic review centered on the production of urban space from the perspective of capitalist relations. Therefore, we sought to understand all the issues that drew new sociability and new ways of visualizing human needs.

INTRODUCTION

In Brazil, the urbanization process of cities appears as one of the aggravating factors of high rates of poverty or socioeconomic inequality. However, it is essential to analyze the historical action of urban space production in order to understand the past and the present time. According to Lefebvre (2001, p. 11), "the urban problem has its starting point with the industrialization process". In this author's conception, this process is the engine of society's transformations. It also induces problems related to the city and the development of urban reality. Thus, it is essential to consider space as a result of social relations and the interaction between space and time in its entirety; one must also pay attention to the functions and forms that build a territory, because "space must be considered as a set of functions and forms that are presented by past and present processes" (SANTOS, 2008, p. 122). In view of these statements, we consider that for such an understanding, it is relevant to analyze its historical process. Wherefore, as Carlos states (2011, p. 56), "the city has its origin at a certain moment in

humanity history and it is constituted, throughout the historical process, assuming different forms and contents.". In this context, we seek to understand the dynamics of urban space productive forces based on its contradictions and articulations, and it is worth emphasizing that the use of the city as a commodity and source of capital reproduction, is, at the same time, stage of valuation/devaluation. This will be the path towards unveiling the socio-spatial urban soil fragmentation, which is due to the capitalist accumulation logic "(...) because it is a social and fragmented reflection, the urban space, especially the capitalist one, is profoundly unequal: the inequality is a characteristic of the capitalist urban space itself (...)" (CORRÊA, 1995, p. 8). Hence, it is necessary to analyze the forms of space occupation as a place resulting from the production process of differentiated locations by urban space producing agents. Regarding the production of urban space, such transformations make it possible to glimpse the degree of complexity that resulted in unequal actions established by urban soil valorization (CARLOS, 2015). In this way, even though we strive to understand different dimensions of urban life, we witness the continuous spatial restructuring that

continues towards the deepening of segregation, as well as towards socio-spatial fragmentation (SOUZA, 2008). Then, Souza (2005, p. 50) summarizes this relationship by stating that "in many cities of the most varied sizes, violence has spread since the last decade, using poor spaces (slums, peripheral allotments, housing estates) on a large scale as a support base". In this sense, the objective of this work is to understand the urbanization process and the issues that go through a study which is able to understand urban space and characteristics that are linked to violence, being extremely important to verify the dynamics of territory with crime, and the relationship with precariousness of peripheries in the city of Belém, located in the State of Pará. In the sense of identifying the relationship between urban growth and vulnerable areas, especially in peripheral spaces that have little or no structure, and from new spatial arrangements, understanding the current territorial dynamics.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

On used methods, we have chosen, the collection of qualitative content and written production in which the work initially addressed a conceptual theoretical framework that was built with a wide bibliographic reviewcentered on the production of urban space from the perspective of capitalist relations as a spatial form resulting from the production process of different locations by the space producing agents. Thereby, the concept of space and, mainly, the production of space, become crucial to understand the process of urban formation. For this, some references will be extremely important: Harvey (2013), Lefebvre (2001), Santos (2008, 2012), Corrêa (1995), Chagas (2014), Carlos (2001, 2015), Maricato (2015) and Souza (2005, 2008, 2014). Considering these readings, it will be possible to understand the current conjuncture of space and how events were fundamental to understand the beginning of peripheral areas occupation process. Then, it became important to build a theoretical-methodological basis of the concept of space that would bring us clarity to comprehend the occupation process in order to understand the current reality of areas "dominated by crime". This does not mean, however, defending an idea unrelated to the depth that unequal capitalist dynamics have established with space. On the contrary, it consists of analyzing the historicity of multiple territorialization through the affirmation of powers by different social groups.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

We can affirm, at the same time, that the entire urbanization process that was present in the process of forming cities was associated with the unequal action of forces on/with space, that is, it impliesthat urban crime corresponds to power strategies carried out in/with/through space, above all, by paying attention to the multiple forms of spatial division/cutout, which must also be associated with the material/symbolic issue of territorial representation of the various forms of space domination/appropriation.In this complex and territorially changeable plot of precarious settlements territorial expansion, a series of inclusions/exclusions was noticed, which at the same time imply an ordering with directly and indirectly disturbing effects for those who use space as a place of survival. This movement feeds the certainty that the production of urban space was transversely aligned with a series of interests. This

process intensifies the transformation of urban land use/occupation pattern, insofar as it identifies spatial and segregation organization in which occupations are forced to distance themselves more and more from the valued spaces. Basically, it is increasingly clear that State, through urban restructuring, "expropriates" the poorest to occupy less valued areas and with a lower financial standard of housing (CARLOS, 2015). Notably the restructuring imposed by State is contradictory, while the territorial planning policies represent hegemonic territorial agents (capital) interests a lot (HARVEY, 2014). In view of the enormous infrastructure discrepancy between "center-periphery", State contributes to reproducing the inequalities inherent in segregated spaces, even though it is responsible for installing urban social facilities.

In this way, the productive processes of urban space are supported by the realization that we do not have, clearly, in the Brazilian case, and that it reflects for the other scales, elements that point to overcoming the delay. Nevertheless, the contemporary context, in the terms exposed by Milton Santos (2012), represents profound changes in representative state policies, which implies urban structural changes and "center-periphery" logic, which guide benefits to the "center", and in positions opposite to "periphery". In view of these elements, which are of different scales and which also refer to our reality, it is necessary to recognize that we are facing a process that has been lasting in space/time. Regardless of the scales of life events and relationships, many dynamics and transformations can be noticed, which indicated many dichotomies in the production of urban space, notably, capitalists and responsible for defining the new "metropolitan form" – a new model of city, with new residential settlements (TRINDADE JR, 2016). To some extent, this transformation increased the fragmentation of urban fabric, in general, scattered peripheries would tend to satisfy criminality territorialization (CHAGAS, 2014). This spatial analysis leads us to think that any superficial analysis of the production of large urban centers is linked to the financial sector as a possibility of productive investment to leverage the process of spatial transformation.This is because the reproduction of capital transforms space into consumable merchandise. This need will become probable with the interference of State, which will accelerate the process of valorization/devaluation of places and, consequently, the expulsion/attraction of inhabitants, that to a large extent will be pushed to peripheries (CORRÊA, 1995).

For Carlos (2011), the mechanisms of social division of space have, in socio-spatial segregation, the condition for realization of private property and capitalist urbanization which takes place, in the sense that justifies appropriation/domination by speculative capital. This is the path that guides forms of use and occupation of segregated spaces (peripheries). It makes us think that violence does not exist exactly only in the appropriation/expropriation, but in all the social, economic and political damages resulting from the unequal process of urban soil occupation. Notably, these are factors that have cooperated greatly to reveal that the tip of the "iceberg" (extreme dimension of urban poverty) highlights the immense mass of excluded people from the labor market, consumption and urban infrastructure services.As a result, a new structure for urban reality is projected, which has violence as its most perverse face (MARICATO, 1995). Thus, the necessary debate about the use of the concept of territory allows us to

identify some changes that are related to changes in the analysis of urban space. In this sense, it became essential to build a conceptual theoretical basis that manages, in a synthetic way, to point out the changes and differentiations throughout history, above all, to the questions that lead and led our reflection to reach the due understanding of particularities of crime territoriality in the city space. With the direction of the complexity analysis of urban reality, the concept of territory gains necessary problematization of a diversity of events, circumstances and factors analyzed by geographic bias, which are taken as a parameter for understanding urban dynamics. These components reverberate the importance in evaluation of progress in considerations about power relations, which we believe, in this work, to be important to explain the problem in relation to space/territory.

Despite being important questions, what happens is that we have a diversity of dimensions that worked the concept in different contexts. In fact, this space-time relationship makes the analysis much more complex. This is, in some way, the recognition of the importance of a subjective dimension of reality, not detached from the objective one, but as constitutive, which places the concept of territory as an analytical instrument of multiple forms of territorial organization and, thus, for the intensification of that that we want to achieve within the perspective of territory and the focus of this work. First, it was essential to build a path that would give us a conceptual basis to understand our object of research, which was initially centered on the category of "space" as the basis for the concept of territory. In the course of the work, we are referring to territory as a concept, because we understand that space is as a major category, as our major or general concept of Geography, as Haesbaert explains (2014, p. 22) (...) "and that imposes itself in front of the other concepts - region, territory, place, landscape... these would, thus, compose the geographical "constellation" or "family" (as Milton Santos preferred). Apprehending these spaces from their social representations demonstrates certain issues or relationships, recognizing that some are now more important than the others. It is about recognizing levels of spatial apprehension that allow us to ponder the forms of interscalarities in the production of urban space "while 'space' focuses on the coexistence and coetaneity of phenomena, 'territory' discusses the problem of power in its inseparable relationship with the production of space" (HAESBAERT, 2014, p. 29).

This relational sense is one of the factors that perhaps explains this effort to follow a path that leads us to understand the inseparable relationship between space and time, since the choice of territory line we follow in this work is based on the complexity in which the space has passed and has been affected by new patterns of space production. Therefore, it is about recognizing both spatiality and temporality of elements present in territories (SANTOS, 2008). Another point to be highlighted is that occupation process was fundamental to characterize peripheral spaces as concentrators of violence (VIEIRA *et al*, 2019) since most crimes are associated with spaces or areas with few urban infrastructure resources and provision of social protection equipment. Thus, the process of socio-spatial segregation and fragmentation of peripheral areas built a set of elements favorable to violence (SOUZA, 2005, BEATO, 2008). In fact, the general characterization of these peripheral spaces reveals that there are more similarities than differences between them, especially when what is at issue are

forms of appropriation/territorialization of a common space. According to Haesbaert (2014, p. 188) "we, thus, associate clusters with "unregulated/ordered", where it is difficult to live together". This aspect is important, since there is an effort to understand what factors may be associated with the occurrence of certain types of crimes,however, the most extreme forms of power seem to be concentrated more in poor areas. This information should prompt further analysis on the reasons for this concentration in certain places (CHAGAS *et al*, 2018). This set of elements shows how territorialization of territorial agents is present in perverse ways, directly interfering in the socio-spatial organization and redefining new/old territorial relations in spaces with "precarious social indicators, associated with the low perspective of social ascension of the younger population" (CHAGAS *et al*, 2014). In view of the entanglement of urban issue, considering that spaces with little social infrastructure appear as "conducting threads" for the advance of violence, in the case of Belém, they end up raising enough elements to correlate them as a reference for violent spaces. "This new pattern of territorialization can only appear in environments of relative instability and disorder, in addition to this, there is the weakening of social protection systems" (COSTA, 2020 p. 86).

These manifestations are particularized in accordance with specificities of urban space and social relations whose urban space is its stage of less or more general social processes, which originate and operate at local scale. For the scale of Belém, information needs to be organized in different degrees of detail, which provided us with support to understand the assembly and overlapping of different agents and power relations in which they are involved. The analysis of distribution of violent areas in the context of the city illustrates how violent spaces have several indicators that are even worse than the other areas around them, since, even if we are referring to peripheries, this same space can be classified in several strata according to the dynamics of the groups. "Violence promotes dramas, panic and complaints, limiting people's freedom and right to come and go, whether within the territory or outside it" (SILVA, 2018, p. 140). In this context, according to Chagas *et al* (2014, p.1) "public policies are unable to efficiently and effectively emerge a public security plan capable of mitigating widespread violence in the urban space". Moreover, it is added the typical internal organization of urban space, which highlights the geography of the phenomenon, making periphery a place of specific multiscale encounter of violence-producing devices. This summary assessment is important in order to arrive at the territories precariousness process, since the structuring of the city is configured as a mosaic, contrasting with areas that enjoy asphalt and areas that prevail on stilts and alleys. Anyway, according to Haesbaert (2014), one can associate the process of precariousness of spaces as the best definitions raised to understand the ways in which certain territorialities are built, also considering power relations, which are intertwined in the forms of appropriation/domination of territories that help to reconfigure new/old territorialities. For this, the control of space is essential for the construction of environments characterized as violent, which represents the political and economic construction of a territory. In this sense, it is highlighted that the discourse which falls on the periphery that denotes them, according to Chagas (2014 *et al*, p. 3), "(...) clearly the spatiality of crime in Belém, highlighting mainly the poorest neighborhoods and the incidence of urban expansion as those with the highest incidence of crime". In

other words, crime conforms to poverty, as if both were necessary variables among themselves. The first, in fact, is a consequence of the lack of assistance experienced by peripheral areas, in the most diverse meanings.

The most cited problems show that violence is at the top when what is at stake are conflicts over areas of interest, which make use of the territory as a means of expanding their areas of influence (tension zone). This context of violence exerted directly and indirectly creates situations that involve conflicts over territories that are marked by authoritarian and coercive actions "The territorial agents (...). They would be classifiable as true active syntagmatic agents" (REIS NETTO and CHAGAS, 2018, p. 3). For this, it was established a discussion that considers periphery as a poor area in the sense of pointing out low-quality socioeconomic and infrastructure indicators, as a place built of social relationships that meet and intertwine in a specific *locus*, which is made up of moments articulated in networks of highly conflicting relationships. This sense is made of concrete daily relationships that incorporate economic, political and social aspects built on the constitution of violence phenomenon which marks the trajectory of young men living on metropolitan regions peripheries (WAISELFISZ, 2016). Therefore, the expansion and strengthening of violence in recent years would inevitably lead to impasses with other forms of organization. It is notable, in any case, the interference in criminality dynamics, directly or indirectly, deliberately or not by groups such as: drug trafficking, militias and other criminal segments, which interfere in the local dynamics. Thus, in order to strengthen spaces characterized as violent, criminality uses devices that define spatial logic, whether due to lethal violence or even due to State's negligence and complicity with the various aspects of violence, such as the denial of citizenship rights and socio-spatial segregation. On the one hand, death policy perpetrated by a dark structure that seems to be a rule on the Metropolitan Region of Belém periphery appears as the clearest demonstration of power since territorial representation can be understood in a broad sensewhich goes beyond the act of killing a competitor due to defense and/or coercion, which can be perceived as an action of material/symbolic territorial appropriation/domination. Regarding this formation, it is important to highlight that power must be faced in an aspect that has violence as its most perverse face which used the imposition of logics that affect environments of extreme spatial instability as a strategy for territorial organization and management.

Conclusion

For a substantial analysis of Belém, reference is made to socio-spatial fragmentation, reduction of territorial mobility and insertion in environments without social security. We must emphasize that, in the current conjuncture of the city, complex forms of territorialization emerged while the precarious settlements multiplied, which, in turn, would facilitate the concentration of violence against life. These spatial conceptions that poor urban peripheries are the focus of violence statistics can be understood as a social representation used as a power representation device built to rank human beings and specific groups. This is quite clear when emphasizing territory and territorialization in the multiplicity of its manifestations, represented by multiple objectives involved. It is important to note that one of the factors that perhaps explains the territorialization of multiple

territorialities is the way of using the "appropriation/ domination" space of urban as a place resulting from the production process of locations differentiated by those linked to crime. This is reinforced by the fact that the organization of criminal agents in specific areas of the city facilitates the progress of crimes both in periphery itself and in noble areas of the city.These understandings must always be associated with conceptions of corresponding territories. It is equally relevant to qualify territoriality and interference/connection with other territorial organization forms. This dynamic has been aggravated by the perverse logic that haunts peripheries, mainly by a variety of crimes that influence the daily life of population. Regarding the new standards, it can be argued that State has a decisive role. It, in turn, exerts a great influence when it ceases to exercise its duty of providing minimum housing conditions, by reorganizing the space according to its interests.In this dynamic, at certain times, spaces of influence are defined based on subjective limits and which do not require fixed delimitations, that is, legally guaranteed. In general, they arise through territorial relations, being part of the conflict strategies developed in spatiality and that characterize these spaces as concentrators of violence.

REFERENCES

BEATO, C. (2008). Compreendendo e avaliando: projetos de segurança pública. Editora UFMG, Minas Gerais, Brasil.

CARLOS, A. F. A. (2011). A condição espacial.Contexto, São Paulo, Brasil.

CARLOS, A. F. A. (2015). Crise urbana. Contexto, São Paulo, Brasil.

CHAGAS, C. A. N. (2014). Geografia, segurança pública e a cartografia dos homicídios na Região Metropolitana de Belém. Boletim Amazônico de Geografia.1.1, pp. 186-204, 2014.

CHAGAS, C. A. N. et al (2014). Territorório, Produção do Espaço e Violência Urbana: Uma leitura Geográfica dos Homicídios na Região Metropolitana de Belém. Anais do VII congresso de Geógrafos. Vitória.

CHAGAS, C. A. N.; SILVA, M. P.; VIEIRA, D. C. M. (2018).Geografia da Violência: produção do espaço, território e segurança pública. GAPTA/UFPA, Pará, Brasil.

CORRÊA, R. L. (1995). O espaço urbano. Ática, São Paulo, Brasil.

COSTA, A. C. S. (2020). Poder e Territóriona na Geografia: Agentes TerritoriaisLocais e Relação com os Crimes Violentos Letais Intencionais (2013-2017), no bairro da Cabanagem, Belém-PA, Dissertação de Mestrado. Programa de Pós-Graduaçãoem Geografia.Universidade Federal doPará, Belém (PA) Brasil

SOUZA, M. L. (2005). O desafio metropolitano: um estudo sobre a problemática sócio-espacial nas metrópoles brasileiras. Bertrand, Rio de Janeiro, Brasil

SOUZA, M. L. (2005). Fobópole: o medo generalizado e a questão da militarização da questão urbana. Bertrand, Rio de Janeiro, Brasil.

HAESBAERT, R. (2014). Viver no Limite: Território e multi/transterritorialiadade em tempos de insegurança e contenção. Bertrand, Rio de Janeiro, Brasil.

HARVEY, D. (2013). Oslimites do Capital. 1 ed. Bom tempo, São Paulo, Brasil.

LEFEBVRE, H. (2001). O direito à cidade. 5 ed. Centauro, São Paulo, Brasil.

MARICATO, E. (1995). Metrópole na periferia do capitalismo: ilegalidade, desigualdade e violência. Hucitec, São Paulo, Brasil.

RAFFESTIN, C. (1993). Por uma geografia do poder. Ática, São Paulo, Brasil.

REIS NETTO, R. M.; CHAGAS, C. A. N. (2019). Associação interna como forma de integração dos presídios às redes externas do tráfico: a percepção dos agentes territoriais da segurança pública no estado do Pará. Revista Direito GV. 15, 2. Brasil.

SANTOS, M. (2012). Manual de Geografia urbana. Editora da Universidade de São Paulo, São Paulo, Brasil.

SANTOS. M.; SILVEIRA, M. L. (2008). O Brasil: território e sociedade no início do século XXI. Record, Rio de Janeiro, Brasil.

SILVA, M. P. (2018). Faces da Metrópole: desigualdades socioespaciais e violência no Distrito de Icoaraci, Belém-PA, Dissertação de Mestrado. Programa de Pós-Graduação em Geografia. Universidade Federal do Pará, Belém (PA) Brasil.

TRINDADE JUNIOR, S. C. (2016). Formação Metropolitana de Belém (1960-1997). PakaTatu, Pará, Brasil.

VIEIRA, D. C. M.; BARROS, A. P. S.; CHAGAS, C. A. N. (2019). PRODUÇÃO DO ESPAÇO, TERRITÓRIO E VIOLÊNCIA: uma análise dos homicídios na 4ª e 5ª AISP, Belém-Pará. InterEspaço: Revista de Geografia e Interdisciplinaridade. 5, 17. pp. 13151.

WAISELFISZ, J. J. (2016). Mapa da Violência 2016: homicídios por arma de fogo no Brasil. Frasco Brasil.

****