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## ZONES OF SACRIFICE AND ENVIRONMENTAL INJUSTICES: A REFLECTION ON THE IMPACTS OF THE PANDEMIC

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### ABSTRACT

RESUMO A doença causada pelo novo coronavírus exigiu uma série de intervenções para reduzir a transmissão do vírus e a rápida evolução da pandemia. A doença vem afetando cada vez mais, um número muito elevado de pessoas, impondo novos hábitos sociais, à população mundial. As informações sobre as questões de biossegurança como medida de prevenção da disseminação da covid-19, estão constantemente na mídia. Por outro lado, as questões econômicas, políticas e de saúde vêm sendo também incorporadas aos debates e seus impactos permitindo que se tenha uma visão holística sobre estratégia de confronto e possibilidade de superação. A escolha do tema, objetiva à reflexão sobre os chamados espaços urbanos segregados, também chamados de Zonas de Sacrificio, presentes na maioria das cidades latino-americanas. O presente artigo apresenta as implicações das condições de vida na ocorrência de grandes contaminações em casos letais; Alguns dos impactos sociais e psicológicos e sugere algumas mudanças que precisam ser implementadas em termos de políticas de urbanização e destaca como as universidades podem ser um espaço importante para criar estratégias de compreensão do quartão urbano, apesar dos ataques que esta instituição tem sofrido, tais como: investido com privatização, redução de dois recursos, substituição de suas instalações, continua sendo um importante espaço de reflexão e criação de novas estratégias.

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## INTRODUCTION

Since the Chinese authorities alerted the World Health Organization - WHO on December 31, 2019 about the occurrence of a series of cases of pneumonia, of unknown origin, or something that has been debated around the world, surrounded by many surveys Regarding identification, origin, forms of transmission, survival time by the body, incubation period, transmission and spread time, most mainly questions about what are the serious strategies to prevent or circumvent the forms of treatment. Or the debate arose from the march 11 declaration that it was a pandemic.

Since then, economic, political and health issues have been incorporated into the debates and their impacts at the local and global level, because the challenges to be faced Thinking about impacts and challenges is important, because it allows the elaboration of confrontation strategies and possibilities of overcoming. I chose for reflection the so-called segregated urban spaces, also called Sacrifice Zones, present in most Latin American cities. These sites are constituted by the strips of urban areas, occupied by a poor population, emptied by these localities within the framework of the urbanization process, implemented throughout the twentieth century and which intensified from the first decades of the 21st century, as urban revitalization projects in the context of global cities One of the

marks of these sites are environmental injustices and also what is known as "slow disasters", that is, "invisible disasters", which develop throughout the day, day by day, which occur in a disguised way. The covid 19 pandemic has abruptly brought about disasters, which is the highest incidence of pollution and deaths. In this article I discuss: the implications of living conditions in the occurrence of large contaminations in lethal cases; Some of the social and psychological impacts and I suggest some changes that need to be implemented in terms of urbanization policies and I stress how universities can be an important space to create strategies for understanding the urban quação, despite the attacks that this institution has suffered. , such as: invested with privatization, reduction of two resources, replacement of its facilities, remains an important space for reflection and creation of new strategies. As a university, we believe we have an inevitable role to play. A role, of course, from the research work carried out by academics, providing evidence, but also a social role: to serve and act as a space for debate of ideas. My reflections were built based on the theoretical contributions of Acserald, Maricatto, Bordieu and Santos, taking into account the urbanization process, the concept of environmental injustice and the role of universities. These contributions produced clues, only clues. This is because more contributions are needed from authors such as Rinkevicius (2000) and Beker (2000). Or first it points to the situation of "double cliff" that corresponds to the conjugation and superposition of two cliffs of poverty and two technological cliffs. to compensate for the new rocks produced by modernity in technical-scientific industrialization. " These two authors can contribute to the understanding of long-term impact breakdowns.

**ZONES OF ENVIRONMENTAL INJUSTICE AND SACRIFICE: the reverse of urbanization:** The origins of the concept of environmental injustice can be identified in social movements in the United States and in the mobilization of part of their poor citizens and vulnerable groups for their greater exposure to environmental risks by living near chemical and radioactive waste deposits or industries with polluting effluents. While studying the topic, Acserald et. al (2009) show how environmental injustice is related to the displacement of populations from revitalized places to places that, in addition to presenting a deficit in urban services and equipment, also have high levels of environmental pollution. These sites are also called the sacrificial zone, an expression that defines areas that receive a concentration of environmentally aggressive practices that affect low-income populations. Many places are called sacrificial zones, this is because:

"It is neither a technical concept nor a legal category, so there are no parameters to objectively qualify "a place as" sacrifice zone ". It is a social and political category under construction, which serves to denounce - and try to reverse - an ethically unacceptable situation: the existence of places whose inhabitants seem to have been condemned to live in a severely polluted environment, which implies, directly or indirectly, a violation of their most basic rights. " (FOLCHI; 2020: 30). These locations are chosen to house companies with high polluting potential, without being obliged to comply with the environmental legislation in force at various levels of government. Despite this, or for this reason, these places are chosen to receive displaced populations from their homes due to interventions in the urban space, generating numerous socio-environmental problems, characterizing environmental injustices. Environmental injustice is associated with issues of unequal distribution of two benefits and prejudices. According to Acserald, it is about:

"A set of situations that are characterized by the unequal distribution of power on a material basis of social life and development, resulting mainly from the elitist appropriation of the territory and two natural resources, in the concentration of two benefits benefited by the environment and unequal exposure of the population to the population and years environmental development costs." (Acserald et al., 2009). It is important to highlight that socio-spatial segregation consists in the division of urban space between integrated (included) and non-integrated (excluded), being perceived more clearly in large cities,

because these, in addition to focusing on a greater number of individuals, make it more explicit to emphasize the unequal way in which space is appropriated by social classes. In this sense, the sociospatial segregation existing in cities is indicative that the premises, within urban architecture, are previously established and unequally adequate (LIBERATO, 2007, pp. 16-17). Bordieu (1997) and Santos (1978) discuss in their works how the organization of the space reflects and at the same time conditions the organization of society. In a class society, as in capitalism, cities presented the same social hierarchy. The capitalist city is unequal and the process of urbanization has created and deepened inequalities and injustices, which can be identified by the presence of unequal spaces, divided by invisible and at the same time visible borders: there is the "center" and the "periphery"; the "high" and "low" zones, the "east" and "west" zones, and other physical divisions that revert into forms of social, cultural and economic exclusion. There are inequalities in cities in most countries in the developing world. In other words, spaces of environmental injustice or areas of sacrifice are a reality that can be seen in different countries. The process intensified in the 1980s, but intensified from the early 21st century with the advent of global cities.

**Global cities, urban competitiveness and gentrification:** The origin of the concept of a global city is directly related to the impacts caused in the metropolises of the First World by the process of globalization of the economy, triggered since the late 1970s. The transformations in the world economy would have led to a crisis of the economic centrality of these metropolises. who lost control of industrial activities, because the companies responsible for them, favored by the development of new communication and information technologies, start to have greater agility in choosing the places of lower cost for their head. The main characteristic of this moment was the establishment of a new relationship between cities and global metropolises, not the latter that became commodity markets, which disputed global investments. In the context of new global city-metropolitan relations, urban revitalization processes become the most important strategy for building competitiveness. Sassen (2000); Pinto (2006); Valley (2007). The revitalization projects have led to large-scale gentrification. To be offered in the global market, a city needs to present a number of features and services that enable the reproduction of capital, such as: Ability to communicate and transmit data to the world, highly qualified labor market, highly specialized production system of insums and advanced financial technologies, complex organizations that serve as a basis for processing information and making decisions about the flow of capital , innovative environment and urban quality of life for the new professional layers of advanced higher education. This adequacy implies gentrification processes.

Gentrification is not a new phenomenon. Its origins date back to the 6070s. Studies conducted in the XXX decade show how it is realized and through the changes in the dynamics of the composition of the site, such as new commercial points, destruction of obsolete equipment and construction of new buildings, implying the valorization of the region. This appreciation is followed by an increase in the costs of goods and services, making it difficult for former residents to stay, due to insufficient income to bear the prices of local goods and services. Unable to remain in their places of residence, they are obliged to occupy new spaces, far from where they lived, many of them, areas of sacrifice, in which a high level of environmental injustice prevails. There is a rich production about this phenomenon. Under normal conditions, the situation of these residents is heavy and tense, because the pandemic situation becomes more difficult, causing health, social and psychological impacts. These living conditions are: difficulty in accessing urban services and infrastructure, such as: poor transport, poor sanitation, non-existent drainage, difficulty in supplying, difficulty in accessing health services, education and health, greater exposure to the occurrence of floods and collapses, etc. There are fewer job opportunities (particularly formal employment), fewer opportunities for professionalisation, greater exposure to violence (marginal or police),

racial discrimination, discrimination against women and children, difficult

MENDES(2018) In a dossier he discusses how the current forms differ from the first specific episodes that were restricted to the city center. The main differences between the new forms of gentrification of the 21st century and that of the 1990s and the still classical form of the phenomenon of the early 1970s are scale and extent. With a local and sporadic anomaly, limited to the city center, gentrification has become a market strategy, spatially generalized throughout the metropolis and even rural heritage areas. Today we see both in the North and in the South Global stake in a global strategy at the service of neoliberal urbanism and revanchist interests of capitalist and social reproduction. (Luiz Mendes et al). The concept of gentrification was first studied in the 1960s by British sociologist Ruth Glass (1964), who conducted studies in London and several Anglo-Saxon and North American cities in the 1970s and 1980s.

access to official justice, difficult access for leisure. The list has no end." Maricato (2003);

It should also be added that the vast majority are employed in low-income businesses, living in densely occupied housing and dealing with small businesses. All these conditions form a favorable framework for the dissemination of Covid19, characterizing or that can be considered as sanitary injustice. Segregation and exclusion will show its harsher face, which can be more intense in the medium and long periods, due to the economic decline projected for Latin America, so it needs to be discussed.

**Areas of sacrifice, sanitary injustice and impacts:** There is no distinction between rich and poor in relation to virus contagion. He attacks both groups. The difference lies in the fight, because the material conditions of life, precarious insertion in the labor market, lack of health infrastructure and lack of access to information leaves the poor, residents of segregated areas in disadvantageous conditions. A research published in the newspaper El país entitled The Maps of the Pandemic Reveal Inequality in Latin America. Published on 04.08 showed, through the contagion data of the cities of São Paulo, Mexico City, Bogota and Argentina how covid 19 intensified in poor and densely populated areas, that is, in the areas of environmental injustices. Here we can see the unequal exposure of a large percental of the population not only to pollution and environmental costs of development, but also to a disease. If the elites have appropriated the spaces that offer better living conditions; the poor "took care" of the places with the worst living conditions. It can also be seen what Bordieu(1997) y Santos(1978) discusses the manifestation of social inequalities in urban space. It is in urban space that inequalities can be perceived, they say. In times of crisis, such as that caused by the pandemic, these inequalities and their impacts become more visible. There is a constant domestic agglomeration and that intensifies in the night time, when dormitories are compatible by many.

The second factor is the impossibility of staying at home – Impossibility affects most, whether those in the formal labor market or in the informal market. In both cases are precarious inserts does not allow them to stay at home. The third is the difficulties of acquiring products that allow effective hygiene, in a context of decreased income. The room is the precariousness of health services or even non-existence – There are few health services, with a lack of staff and beds. And finally, we have a factor that started to be discussed after the publication of a research conducted by the Federal University of São Paulo, which showed how public transport is the focus of dissemination of the virus and people from the periphery spend many hours intervening, contaminating and contaminating their families. The combination of these factors contributes to the spread in the peripheries with greater intensity, as well as that it was more lethal, generating social and psychological impacts. Social impacts refer to the increase in vulnerabilities, due largely to the impairment of family income, caused by the following factors: unemployment, closure of micro businesses, impossibility of performing autonomous activities and death of elderly providers. Psychological impacts refer to the

damage caused by various situations, such as: shock of the deaths of relatives and neighbors, unemployment, interruption of life projects and uncertainty about the future. Of course, other impacts will occur in the short, medium and long term, which should be identified later.

A survey by Unifesp crossed data of deaths in the capital with the profile of subway users. According to the researcher, analysis confirms the perception that the poorest are the most affected.

## Conclusion

The reflections showed that in the segregated spaces, also called sacrificial zones, the residents suffered more intensely the devastation of COVID-19. It also showed that they will suffer impacts that may extend for generations, considering that they have had their incomes compromised and life projects interrupted. In view of these (in)certainties, it is necessary to discuss, in a more intense way, and the development directions in Latin America should be expanded. Possibly the number of revitalization projects will decline, considering the context of the world economy. However, some will take effect, and some changes are needed. The dispute for investments in global cities, on the part of metropolises, cannot prioritize only the needs of capital reproduction. There must also be mechanisms that keep the population in the revitalized places. In other words, preventing gentrification The pandemic has shown how damaging this has been. Promoting such changes is one of the great post-pandemic challenges, as it will take place with the elaboration of new urbanization policies, built through the establishment of a new relationship between global cities and metropolises. Achieving this depends on political and economic issues, whose equation is complex, but extremely necessary. To some extent we can say that this will be the challenge for the invisible barriers of the city to be overcome. In conclusion, I believe that inside universities measures can be taken for the construction of new cities through the production of knowledge, insertion of the urban theme in the contents of the various courses and in the extension activities.

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