

Poverty in *urban zones of exception*: urban segregation in São Paulo

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The central hypothesis to be engaged in this work is that the elimination of the image of urban poverty, of living precariously, which in the beginning of the 20th century was disguised by the need to eliminate unhealthiness and immorality, has undergone changes in its way of application, without, however, leaving the Brazilian political urban agenda. If urban segregation presupposes the use of urban design tools, especially road works for the creation of *locations* (Villaça, 2004), it is intended to present here the way in which the Public Policy in Brazil has acted to create what could be called “*segregating locations*”, by sponsoring the elimination of slums.

The return guarantee for investments to be made by the private sector presupposes, in the current case of the Água Espraiada Consortium for Urban Operation (OUCAE, in Portuguese), in the municipality of Sao Paulo, the total suppression of 29 slums, with the prolongation of the Roberto Marinho Avenue, the building of a tunnel and a linear park. The motto for the works estimated in more than 4 billion Brazilian reais is the opening of a new front for real estate capital, with emphasis on private investments in housing and services. If the success of this contemporary model of urban planning presupposes the viability of private investments, it is convenient to consider the mechanism that ensures such viability. This research intends, therefore, to explore the final form of these plans – urban design itself –; how the physical poverty has been eliminated, notably the slums and the other “informal settlements”, as a hurdle to the return of private investment. Opposing the consolidated speech in the last quarter of the 20th century, about the integration of informal settlements to the formal city as an urban policy, the State continues to fund its elimination in regions destined to be given to the real estate market in exchange for ‘financial contribution’ (in the form of onerous grant of the right to build).

From a historical perspective, of an analysis of the way the State has worked the issue of slums in two specific contexts – Sao Paulo and Rio de Janeiro – it is intended to demonstrate that a lot of the recent actions have, despite their new clothes, similarities with ancient practices, like the maintenance of the removal culture, which has characterized the most conservative urban actions for more than a century.

The phenomenon observed in the OUCAE's scope follows a logic that has been applied in different Brazilian cities, and which the most apparent result is the elimination of slum territories in big cities' central areas. If it is chocking that the State can ally itself with real estate capital to define in what determined part of Sao Paulo city more than eight thousand families will be removed to give space to a park, one can say that the case in study has absurd proportions. However, it cannot be treated as a "new" phenomenon. The slums in the south region of Rio de Janeiro, for instance, although numerous and quite outstanding in the landscape, add up to a relatively small percentage if we look closely to the northern regions and, especially, to the west of the city. Tens of slums were completely removed in the Lagoa Rodrigo de Freitas' surroundings between the years 1940 and 1960. The case of Recife is also emblematic. If the *mocambos* in the wetlands distinguished themselves as the standard typology for slums in that municipality, today they are a minority amongst the wetlands' settlements. After violent actions in the years of 1930 and 1940, in which more than 40.000 *mocambos* were demolished in the central area, one can say that the slum phenomenon in Recife takes on, predominantly, the form of occupation of slopes on the outskirts of the city. In Sao Paulo, slums are also being eliminated from the expanded centre since the last decades, instead of being urbanized.

The finding that there isn't necessarily a change in the State's action logics (in the case of removed settlements) and the study of today's urbanization practices, such as slum consolidation in the city's suburbs, direct the research to reading the contradictions posed by the increase in public investment in slum urbanization, especially with the *PAC-Urbanização de Assentamentos Precários* (PAC-UAP; a political package of measures for slum urbanization), in the face of the interests of real estate capital and large builders, since the years 2000 in Brazil.

Therefore, the historical reading on the evolution of the applied methods by the State and by architects involved in the issue gain importance, besides the context analysis set by the rise of investments in social policies in the years 2000 and its reflex in urban and housing policies developed on a municipal level. Under this scope, the changes on focus that the State has given to urbanization will be questioned, as well as the removal of slums as a practice that has yet to be overcome.

The used methods of research here presented are based on a historical-structural approach, through which empirical data are confronted to theoretical references and vice-versa. The analyzed slums were mapped and seen according to their urbanization potential, from data collected empirically. The data will be presented graphically to demonstrate solutions that could be adopted out of the Urban Operation's scope; scenarios that consider the integration of the settlements to the formal city, recognition of their urban qualities, infrastructure adequacy and the maintenance of its residents. The research also has a review of bibliographical references on the social production of urban spaces in Brazilian cities, and also other works that have been contributing to the making of a theoretical outline from which the study object has been analyzed.