

The violent occupation of territories, resistance, massacres of peoples and the impoverished in the history of Brazil – but the struggle continues

Territórios violados, resistências e massacres de povos e pobres na história do Brasil – mas a luta continua

La ocupación violenta de territorios, resistencias y masacres de pueblos y de pobres en la historia del Brasil – pero la lucha continua



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Abstract: The reflection on the violation of territories and territorialities of the natural and human natures in the process of the expansion, in space and time, of the unrelenting needs of capitalism to serve its own economic interests, was fundamental for reinforcing the role of dominated and oppressed classes in Brazil's history. The historical and dialectical materialism approach, supported by procedures relevant to the free analysis of the content in the bibliographical dimension related to this issue was the emphasizing of words actually spoken by the subjects who pronounce their world, exposing existential practices that serve to understand the world in the sense of changing it, was important for carrying out our reflection. The main result achieved by the study refers to the exposure of the fact that, in spite of the hideous strength of the techno-instrumental rationality of capitalism, resulting in the violation of the territories that are the objects of its speculation, the reactions of the dominated socioeconomic strata of society will never cease to exist.

Keywords: Capitalism. History. Dialectics. Territory in Use.

Resumo: A reflexão sobre a violação de territórios e territorialidades das naturezas natural e humana no processo de expansão no tempo-espaço do capitalismo perverso que visa ao atendimento, preponderante, dos seus interesses econômicos, foi de grande relevância para reforçar o papel das classes dominadas e oprimidas na história do Brasil. O materialismo histórico e dialético, com o suporte de métodos de procedimentos relativos a uma análise livre do conteúdo de parte da bibliografia acerca da problemática ora tratada e do destaque de palavras ditas por sujeitos que pronunciam o seu mundo, através da sua prática existencial, para entendê-lo melhor no sentido de mudá-lo, foi de fundamental importância para a concretização da nossa reflexão. O principal resultado ao qual se chegou refere-se à explicitação do fato de que, não obstante os fortes imperativos da racionalidade técnico-instrumental do capitalismo que viola os territórios que lhes interessa, nunca deixa de haver reações das classes dominadas a tais ações.

Palavras-chave: Capitalismo. História. Dialética. Território Usado.

Resumen: La reflexión sobre la ocupación violenta de territorios y territorialidades de las naturalezas natural y humana en el proceso de expansión en el espacio-tiempo del capitalismo perverso, que vigila de manera preponderante sus intereses económicos, fue de gran relevancia para reforzar el papel de las clases dominadas y oprimidas en la historia de Brasil. El materialismo histórico y dialéctico, con el soporte metodológico de los procedimientos relativos al análisis libre del contenido de la parte bibliográfica acerca de la problemática y destacando las palabras usadas por los sujetos para nombrar su mundo, para entenderlo mejor, en el sentido del cambio, fue de fundamental importancia para la realización de nuestra reflexión. El principal resultado al que se llegó se refiere a la explicitación del hecho de que, no obstante los fuertes imperativos de la racionalidad técnico-instrumental del capitalismo que violenta los territorios que le interesa, nunca deja de haber reacciones de las clases dominadas a tales acciones.

Palabras clave: Capitalismo. Historia. Dialéctica. Territorio Usado.

Introduction

The main objective of this article is to highlight the idea of how, in the historical proceedings of the time-space of capitalism, nature itself and historical nature (nature as territory and as territorialities constructed by dominated and oppressed classes) have always been the target of a brutal violence whose aim is to generate wealth.

The permanently realized praxis of day-to-day communication activities is the main basis for gaining an idea about the violation of territories, following the theoretical-methodological presuppositions of Freire (1977), further developed by the research group Social Movements and Urban Space (*Movimentos Sociais e Espaço Urbano (MSEU)*), alongside experiences of communal action and social movements in Recife.

Official historical records wish to demonstrate that, during 500 years of Brazil, the national territory constructed itself in a pacific and harmonious way, always looking forward to the formation of a politically and economically strong country. This would have involved the participation of *heroes* from dominant classes (lords, nobles, commercial and industrial figures, for example) to tame national territory. However, the real history reveals a portraiture that is quite the contrary.

The truth of the matter is that, due to the nature of capitalism itself, the process of the formation and construction of Brazilian territory has not been pacific nor harmonious. The effects of continued progress have permeated to cause a series of contradictions that rouse tensions and conflicts on the side of dominated and oppressed classes. Over the centuries, dominant classes have used the formulation of a pacific and harmonious kind of discourse to overbear counterparts in favor of a construction of territory embedded with their own desires.

Class interest is so strong that individuals and social groups from the dominated and oppressed classes have come to challenge

processes of violation – invasion, destruction and subordination to capitalist interests. In the defense of their territories and territorialities, they have suffered criminalization, massacres and even burnings. Even though there have been moments when such individuals were able to achieve conquests fundamental for their existence, nevertheless, those responsible for such conquests have suffered retaliation by hegemonic interests.

Currently entwined in a process that perpetuates obscurantist ideas and practices, the dominated and oppressed classes are once again the target of threats, meaning taking away their rights and, moreover, the violation of their territories and territorialities, those which were constructed with a great deal of struggle and resistance. Hence, to march alongside these social classes is highly relevant, hearing them and upholding their words so that they, in putting forth their voice, can become stronger in a context teeming with threats to their existence. In terms of the history of Brazil, they will always have such an important role.

The option for the method of approach here finds itself in historical and dialectical materialism. Accordingly, one views history as a process of the World in the sense of its being in permanent movement - in particular, the concretization of interests favoring the expansion of capitalism. One considered the contradictions inherent to this process (the reactions of the dominated and oppressed classes), provoking the establishment of conflicts which can provide the means to review and revert projects' headings for the use of territory use which have taken hold (in order to consider other possibilities for the World).

As methods for the procedures, a free analysis of the content of theoretical reflections related to the problem focused on became utilized, as well as gathering information obtained about experiences of reflection and reaction to capitalism's self-centered imperatives. Therefore, the closeness of the author to social movements during his academic career was important for the production of this article.

Under the above perspective, the article is structured to come to grips with nearly 520 years of violation of territories (first section). Acts of negating, or acts of repression by massacre or criminalization of reactions in society, are also put under the lens (second section). Finally, there is the need to continue the struggle, based on what was learnt from experience, through a continuous mobilization moved along by the hope that another World is possible (third section).

Five hundred and twenty years of the most intense violation of territory

Here we put forward for consideration the process of how, around 520 years ago, the capitalist pact of production-circulation-consumption in Brazil quickly ignited brutal intentions, which were masked by fables of progress/development, violating territories and territorialities. European expansion disrespected everything that stood in its path. The logic of capitalism masked in fables of development could never follow a straight line, since the implantation of such circumstances cause contradictions in the flow of history. Not everybody stayed in line. Characteristic of the nation's movement through history, originating in the dominated and oppressed social classes, there is continual regeneration of contradictory processes in reaction to the ugly face of capitalism's imperatives.

Effectively, the agents of the new world (in the process now defined as globalization) have expanded over a range of world territories, being able to destroy much of what they come across to transform goods that generate wealth. In this sense, as Moraes (1997) has highlighted, territories are, traditionally, "empty areas" to be filled in continuously, as if they were blank sheets.

Concerning this, *mutatis mutandis*, preoccupied in a similar way, Freyre (1985) highlighted that, in the Northeast of Brazil,

this manifested itself in the process of malevolent and extensive expansion of sugar cane culture, destroying forests, sources of water, soils, animals and people, in order to bank a model of exploitation that ignored the question of ecology.

From the mid-19th century to the beginning of the 20th century, many believed that, in principle, progress was synonymous with a balance of social progress. Geography, on the other hand, had observed the consolidation of a process of violation of territories (not only “empty” ones but also those occupied over centuries) by interests linked to imperatives of economic rationalists.

Unfortunately, the over spilling of cities’ growth to their borders works to mutilate rural areas: besides all kinds of garbage filling the intermediate space between city and countryside, there is also the eerie speculation which takes hold of the most enchanting features of the neighborhood. The space is divided into rectangular lots, neatly surrounded by uniform walls, and then landowners build hundreds and thousands of pretentious little houses. [...] Along the coast, the most picturesque cliffs and enchanting beaches are also up for grabs by envious property owners or by the enthusiasts of land speculation who appreciates nature’s jewels in the same way that moneychangers will evaluate gold ingots. In the mountains frequently visited by sightseers, the same fever for acquisition takes over the inhabitants. Scenery is cut into rectangles and sold to the highest bidder. Each natural curiosity – outcrop, grotto, waterfall, glacier opening, everything up to the sound of an echo – can become fair game for the property market. (RECLUS, [1866] 2010, p. 85-86)

The author is clearly preoccupied with problems connected with the expansion of speculative interests in the countryside, on the coast and in the mountains. A transformation into merchandise occurs in the formation of property, begetting profits obtained through the insertion of these spaces and everything they contain onto the market.

Entrepreneurs seize waterfalls and surround them with picket fences that prohibit non-paying wanderers from contemplating turbulent waters. Then comes the flood of publicity to transform the drops of water that are broken into vapor by the breeze into the beautiful coins that ring in rays of sunshine. It is precisely because of its beauty that nature becomes something profane, in the midst of a wad of speculation. Not surprisingly, farmers and industrial workers neglect to ask themselves whether they are spoiling the earth. Certainly, the “hard labor” of the worker is not so preoccupied with the countryside’s enchantments nor the harmony of its scenery, as long as the soil continues to produce abundant harvests. Hacking away at woodlands, he hits away at the trees that are nuisances to him, and goes on to mutilate others, leaving behind stakes and brooms. Vast regions, once beautiful and lovely to run through, have totally lost their noble character. It has now become a repugnant experience to cast our eyes upon them. (RECLUS, [1866] 2010, p. 86-87)

One recognizes brutality in this mission to violate territories. It starts from the destruction of previously constructed territorialities – be it in the dynamics of the “naturalness” of nature, or in the dynamics of a historically constructed nature. One observes not only the loss of something inherent to being human (insofar as, for the author, “Man is nature acquiring consciousness of itself (RECLUS, 2010, p. 13)”). Simultaneously, there are sentiments of indignation upon viewing the results of violating behaviors.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, another French geographer would become preoccupied with today’s known “environmental problems”, related to deforesting, soil degradation, and the extermination of animals and human beings. In all of their complexity, the acts of violation of territories and territorialities occurred as acts based on financial gain.

Devastation and poaching done by Tuareg nomads in the cultivated oasis, or unwise and irrational exploitation of plants producing rubber in the Congo or in the Amazon – are facts comparable to

the excessive hunting which causes the extermination of certain species – birds for headsets, animals with valuable skins or ivory. If one reflects upon this, one will see that primitive destruction of vegetation, hunting or fishing, without recognizing the always such grave and general consequences [sic], without, most certainly, deserving such severe judgement, and even sometimes being able to be associated with a wise economy of the earth, all have the tendency towards the *removal* of living beings [sic] from our globe, and towards the reproduction of which Man in no way cooperated; and all of them, in their principle, are murderers. (BRUNHES, [1909] 1962, p. 59)

The author called attention to the need for revising practices of occupation and use of soil, vegetation, water, as well as the nature of the social relationships of the time, proposing what he named *wise economy of the earth*. Associated with this observation, worthy of note is the necessity of considering limits in relation to the use of work instruments utilized by men and women with regard to maintenance and, consequently, reproduction in time-space of their power over the Earth. However,

The power and means available to Man are limited and Man himself confronts insurmountable limits. In the same way, our activity on the surface of the earth finds itself detained by *restrictive* conditions. Within certain limits, he can vary his game [sic] and his movements; he cannot, however, succeed in making this framework cease to exist: many times [sic] it is possible to modify it, but never dismantle it. (BRUNHES, [1909] 1962, p. 439)

Therefore, the author recognized the essential conditions inherent to the question of the environment, articulated in the question of society - interconnected and always in activity. He means to reinstate, in a profound way, the necessity for Man to become self-conscious of the need to come close to nature again, in a more humble, more communicative and wiser way.

One must never forget that the facts of Human Geography do not encounter their complete explanation, nor their sole coordination principle, in geographic causes only [sic]: the psychological reflex from geographical causes in the human being, in the extent of their own appetites, necessities or desires, this [sic] is very much the subtle and complex factor which should prevail through the whole study of Human Geography: the factor which permits the distribution and coordination of facts, in relation to natural causes and in relation to Man. Many geographers, after having spoken, and not without reason, of the action and reaction of natural forces [sic] and human forces, they ask with excessive rigor and in a very abstract way: up to what point do natural forces have an influence on human activity and to what extent does Man react in the face of such forces? And would it not be convenient to immediately adopt, as a principle of general scientific division, two anti-ethical terms [sic]: the acting of Nature on man and the reaction or action of man on Nature? It was at this point that the expressions passive or static Human Geography and active or dynamic Human Geography were born (BRUNHES, 1962, p. 440).

The question that has just been posed here implies that, in a more explicit sense, there would be the recognition that men and women should be able to perceive that they, too, constitute important components of nature. Needless to say, Élisée Reclus would follow suit.

Man is never completely passive or, better said, he is only entirely passive when agents of the physical world take away his life. As long as he lives, he acts [sic], reacts; drinks, eats, lies down at some point on the globe to sleep. In these acts, it is easy to recognize the gesture of his own participation in geographic facts. (BRUNHES, [1909] 1962, p. 441)

Therefore, in view of this statement, one observes that geography, from its seminal moments in the middle of the

nineteenth century, has placed itself as a *restless* field of scientific knowledge. The discipline possesses a complex and dynamic vision of the world. For this reason, it has opened out interesting paths to think of concrete “possibilities” with an end to confronting the exacerbated degree of nature’s violation via the advent of new techniques that have intermediated the relationships between man and the existing world that surrounds him.

If men and women do not become conscious of such a problem, their existential environments will undergo more harm and this will have rebounds on they themselves, notably because nature’s answer occurs in accordance with the posture of anthropic-anthropogenic actions in relation to the medium that serves as a system of support. When such a posture is unwise and destructive to an exacerbated degree, Nature can “take its revenge”.

In this way, everything for men is, over the surface of our globe, customary work, the healthy comprehension of the physical facts and skill in adapting to them. However, it is necessary for everything to operate smoothly and in a timely manner – to be neatly perceived, prepared and conducted by exact scientific research. The revenge of the antagonized physical facts becomes crueler with the increase in the proportions of the grandiose and glorious size of the human conquest. (BRUNHES, [1909]1962, p. 443)

On the psychological plane, there was an urge to change theoretical and practical perceptions in relation to Nature; there existed an impulse to get to the root of this problem. The root of the problem was in society’s model of consumerism, already present in that historical period.

This perspective appealed for a quest to find a way to re-educate Man, perhaps a heading towards “environmental education”, as we know it today. Elisée Reclus was one of the recalcitrant geographers who had indicated this path. This was the beginning of trying to combat, through geographical explanation, the impacts caused by the excesses of consumerism.

In a certain way, to force natural conditions and to exaggerate the extension of a culture amount to the same, excessively adding on production. The world has a limited number of mouths and stomachs [sic] ready to receive coffee or wine. One would not even know how to modify, abruptly, their global number, nor their individual capacity. Furthermore, it is necessary to add that, to regulate the necessity for consumption, in the first place we have the psychological factor (tastes, fashion, habit, tradition), which is the true master (BRUNHES, 1962, p. 444).

Here is a perspective on the world where the question of violation of territories was endemic, referring to the problematic of the (distinctly destructive) process of occupation of soil over the Earth's spaces. Economic rationalism already predominated in a consumer society in the process of growth and consolidation.

Under the general heading of *destructive occupation*, one should gather all [sic] exploitation of the earth that tends to extract raw minerals, vegetation or animals, without any intention, or means, of restitution. Those who take molasse or marble material from a quarry to build their dwelling dislocate, without any intention of substituting them, materials naturally laid into the soil. Fishing and hunting which are not linked to breeding, such as for pheasants or salmon, equally constitute an extraction from Nature that is not compensated for by human effort. (BRUNHES, [1909] 1962, p. 290)

Wisely enough, one knew how to distinguish the more necessary forms of occupation for human existence from those that were truly predatory, occurring only for the satisfaction of economic interests. Society's attention was called to the negative impacts of this violating occupation at the time.

Amongst the forms of destructive occupation, some possess a normal character, methodical; others, on the contrary, are characterized by moderated intensity, and they are actually

worthy of this designation [...] then there is economic pillage or, put more simply, devastation. Destructive economy [...] is, in a certain sense, a particular way of collecting, but which is exercised over Nature with much more violence. From this [*sic*] violent attempt misery may result; this is therefore characterized as devastation. (BRUNHES, [1909] 1962, p. 291)

The catastrophe of abandonment after years of exploitation, leaving a trail of misery in the space utilized after the depletion of activities in mining, forest devastation and the extermination of animals and men - the Africans and Indians wiped out in the process of "colonization" of the New World. All of this contrasted with the formation of a "matured reaction" in societies in the face of such destructive processes. Examples of how there are conditions to take up the reins again in the contradictory process of territorial violation offer more adequate solutions for humanity.

In recent times, there has been a major preoccupation about all of these destructive excesses. In Europe, the United States and Canada, energetic measures against devastation have been taken. The United States were the leading example creating a type of natural museum, the *National Parks*, which are true *conservatoriums* of vegetable and animal life, alongside all their other natural treasures. National parks were created in Canada, Argentina, Germany, Switzerland, France, etc. (BRUNHES, [1909] 1962, p. 300)

The author stated the fact that, contradictorily, the violating process of territories and territorialities can be socially controlled through, for example, an adequate legislation, seeking more constructive actions in terms of territorial production.

Therefore, *destructive* economy can have an end and a significance that are *constructive*. It destroys, that much is true. The geographical fact continues to be evident: this form of economy incessantly robs, at a thousand points, the surface of

the earth of its riches, which are never and will never have a return. However, if one has committed, frequently [*sic*], a pillage, a wastage, many times this has granted men the material or more powerful means for them to have come to the current stage of incomparable scientific and technical development of civilized life on the surface of our globe. (BRUNHES, [1909] 1962, p. 326)

Finally, here before us is another great contradiction pointed out by the author, according to which all processes of destructive production of territories are accompanied by actions of construction. This is part of the nature and history of men and women in the world. Since we do not have a way to produce space without destroying nature, one must value a compromise in terms of the responsibility of men and women for the world to be reconstructed in a way which is environmentally valid, respecting its diversity in order to maintain the beauty of the complexity of the Planet.

The negation, massacre and criminalization of the experiences of social reaction

Basing himself on “the principle of activity”, Bruhnes (1909, p. 257, *apud* CASTILHO, 2017b)¹, considered the permanent contradictory movement between a force that would break down/ destroy – the *mad force of the sun* – and another force that would reintegrate/ construct/ reconstruct – the *wise force of the earth* – dialectically, disordering and reordering space. In turn, this brings us back to the idea that, instead of being stable/ certain, the World is completely unstable/ uncertain, awakening the feeling that it is possible to change the course of things.

As stated in the previous section, in contrast to being controlled by the *wise force of the earth*, the logic of techno-instrumental

¹ BRUNHES, J. Geografia humana. First Edition. Rio de Janeiro: Editora Fundo de Cultura, 1962 [1909].

capitalist rationality, oriented largely by the generation of wealth at any cost, has continued to rule over the Planet's civilizing process. The violation of territories and territorialities has not only consolidated itself, but at the same time has expanded in space-time. This has permanently threatened the domains of nature that should be, as Ab' Sáber (2003) stressed, respected as historical-scenic patrimony for humanity.

The extermination and/or slavery of natural nature and historical nature has not ceased to exist in the World's time-space. All of this process has merely taken on a new meaning, today, in the discourse of a future that, according to Leroy (2010), never reaches social collectivity. Nevertheless, since history is a contradictory process, always moving along (in some sense), collaborative experiences of resistance, of considerable variety, have been tracing themselves out on the inside of violated territories.

The process of social-territorial formation of Brazil, aligned with what the "official story has told us", on the other hand, exercises an alienating influence on the underprivileged and oppressed classes. The shaping of Brazil did not occur in a linear manner and the heroes applauded by the dominating classes are, in fact, representatives of an evil civilizing process that remains until the current day, violating territories and territorialities.

The social-territorial formation of Brazil spirals and is full of conflicts inherent to the contradiction of the *official* story, and these conflicts have always moved themselves along in some sense. Under this perspective, the dominated and oppressed classes have also had their heroes and representations of resistance to the current civilizing project, deserving of a revival and of our recognition.

To repeat a concept by the author of the preface of Max Beer's work – *A History of British Socialism* – with respect to universal history, we can also affirm that, in relation to our own history, "for some time one feels the need for a history which is not glorification of the ruling classes". And to trace such a history is all I have thought

of doing. [...] I wanted to show [...] as well, in our history, *heroes and great feats* are not heroes and feats, but only in the way that they correspond to the interests of the ruling classes, for whose benefit history is made official... [...] The *Cabanagem* separatist revolution in Pará (1833-36), the *Balaçada* in Maranhão (1838-41) and the *Praieira Revolt* of 1848 in Pernambuco [...] are merely, in the general vision of our historians, facts without social significance and which express merely the explosion of “bestial” sentiments and passions of the masses. This is particularly true for the first two (PRADO JÚNIOR, 1985, p. 8).

The alternative aspirations sought after by such movements, amongst so many others that have made themselves present in Brazilian history, as well as the experiences of territories constructed with one foot in organic rationality – that is to say, contrary to hegemonic rationality – were denied and destroyed barbarously. There were also the innumerable *quilombos* that formed themselves in Brazil during the official period of slavery. The most well-known leaderships were Zumbi and Dandara from the *Quilombo dos Palmares*.

Somewhat parallel to this, during the period of the First Republic or Old Republic (or Sword Republic), the territory of Belo Monte was completely exterminated by the well-known “Canudos Campaign”. Its most noteworthy leader was Antônio Conselheiro, who also perished because of the violence. Subsequently, discourses have represented this experience as something irrelevant, savage and therefore worthy of being ignored, without presenting the true nature of the occurrences.

In truth, any movement emerging from the dominated and oppressed classes has always been decimated – a target for destruction. Nonetheless, elements inherent to their respective territorialities have remained as *rugged individualisms*, thereby sharpening the psychological dimension of the society.

There have always existed feelings of dread and brutality amid the dominant classes in relation to the downtrodden. This is not only due to the fear of the loss of their centuries-old privileges and

possessions. At the same time, the upper classes boast feelings of contempt towards the less fortunate, the latter whose roots are nailed into the fate of slavery. This social distancing is characteristic of Brazil's territorial formation,

[...] aggravating oppositions [between classes] to accumulate, against the backdrop of ethno-cultural uniformity and national unity, anti-social and traumatic tensions. As a consequence, the order of elites - first of all Portuguese, then Lusitano-American, and, finally, Brazilian - have always lived and continue to live in panic over the fear of an uprising by the oppressed classes. A clear expression of this fear and panic finds itself in the repressive brutality against any kind of insurgency. The authoritarian hold on central power will not admit any alteration of the order enforced by law. (RIBEIRO, 2015, p. 20)

This feeling has always been so prevalent that it has influenced movements with significant support from people in the dominant classes who - based on ideals from Europe's Enlightenment period - imagined a Brazil that was quite different from the dominant project that has persisted over space-time, with a little more liberty. However, the collective of Brazilian men and women has yet to embrace such a desirable liberty.

Every time there has been a sudden move in the form of a protest or revolt by the dominated and oppressed classes, or just budging to yield more rights for the dominated and repressed classes, the movement has been brutally repressed, massacred or criminalized. According to Souza (2017), the attitude remains the same up to the present day.

The fight must continue: learning, movement and hope

While there is still capitalism, the underlying intents of the socio-territorial dynamics that sustain it will be guided, predominantly,

by the imperatives of the logic of evil capitalist techno-instrumental rationality insofar as this mode of production-circulation-consumption is guaranteed by its three basic principles: work exploitation, economic growth and creation of wealth. As written by Santos (2000), it is about an evil world that presents itself as one that is just for all – a fable – but that, at the same time, by its own dialectical nature, presents perspectives for change.

This is the reason why criticisms made by E. Reclus and J. Bruhnes, on the referred to rationality, from the nineteenth century to the beginning of the twentieth century, are still pertinent in the twenty-first century. In effect, in accordance with Harvey (2013), capitalism has consolidated itself, increasingly, in its historical spatial-temporal expansion, particularly over the past five hundred years. It takes advantage of the dynamic of creative destruction to guarantee the permanent generation of wealth.

History, in this perspective, also teaches us that the generation of wealth, seeking lucrative gains at any cost, continues to be maintained, even through the sophisticated “official” discourse that wears the disguise of perspectives of modernization processes (in the city and the country) that need to substitute local traditions (ways of life, values, etc.). However, this alternative is fatal and untrue to the concretization of territorial development. Andrade (1983) gave us a spectacular example with respect to this, critically analyzing the process of change in view of the imperatives of modernization that occurred in the great works of irrigation in the *Sertão* of the Northeast of Brazil.

However, the process continually moves itself along through time-space, in a contradictory and conflicting historical dynamic. There have always been, in some way, reactions by the dominated and oppressed social classes in the arduous attempt to conquer their respective positions in Brazilian society and territory, vehemently pushing back the threats to their territories.

Simultaneously, the tension of social struggles inherent to the dominated and oppressed classes - their being conscious of the fact

that the project for society and territory reaching them does not consider their collective life story – triggers a mobilized tension, notably when it reacts to the greed impregnated in hegemonic interests.

On the other hand, in spite of the denial, killing and criminalization of resistances of dominated and oppressed classes as a consequence of the violation of their territories and territorialities, ways of gaining ground inherent to experiences of reaction have won permanence in time-space over the globe, on the techno-spherical level, combatting the attempts to destroy them (Figure 1).

Figure 1 – Images of the projection of a city model superimposed over an existing city, violating local natural and historical *naturalness*. Recife, Pernambuco.



Source: Author's personal collection (2013).

Note: In the first of the photos above, one can observe the Project for the implementation of Capibaribe Park as a system resulting from the articulation of the city's greenery. The main axis is the Capibaribe River. Capibaribe Park has ignored the courageous and historical weaving of territory by dominated and oppressed riverside dwellers, adjacent to domineering segments of riverside territory constructed by privileged classes. The second photo shows the New Recife Project. New Recife symbolizes the overriding historical continuity in the use of territory: it negates all that is present at the geographical site. Until today, the social movement #OcupeEstelita has succeeded in blocking the advances of this Project.

In effect, the dominant classes have always elaborated and striven to execute projects of territorial use in their own image and likeness. They ignore organic interests of the dominated and oppressed classes, since the poor are of no interest to them.

In order to achieve this, the techniques used to violate territories are becoming more and more sophisticated. Historical and traditional neighborhoods undergo violation when subjects are removed from their respective territories. In current times, poor and marginalized populations are expelled from their territories so that urban planning ventures can move in – hygienic gentrification in the form of imposing, ultramodern architecture. Realizations of shows (and conceptualizations for future national and international grand events in the current decade) have traditionally received the support of the State Government, always attending to hegemonic interests (ROLNIK, 2015).

On the psychospherical level, in consideration of the psychological elements explored by Reclus (2010) and Brunhes (1962), we heard what was said by the people who live in their own historically constructed areas. Sets of words were collected and reflected upon. They reveal a psychological dimension and a history of great resistance and social resilience in their desire to maintain territories and reinforce their own territorialities (Figure 2).

Figure 2 –Utterances in the daily existence of residents threatened by the interests of The Land and Real Estate Business Framework (Complexo Fundiário Imobiliário Comercial Financeiro-CFICF) during social mobilization activities in Recife.



Source: Fieldwork and activities experienced by the author of this article during more than a decade of assessment experienced alongside social movements in Recife. Here there are highlighted the words most frequently expressed by residents who have found their territories under threat.

Related to this set of words, as highlighted by Freire (2019), is the act of expressing one's world. It constitutes a fundamental step in the difficult process of social change. Change begins when the world forms its words for individuals to then discuss and question it. According to Santos (1987), they always seek *to be more* in a world that is so adverse to their hopes. According to the same author, the conquest for citizenship lies above everything else and, in turn, as observed by Schwarcz e Starling (2015), it is all about overcoming the centuries-old State of sub-citizenry of the dominated and oppressed classes of Brazil.

Space is, at once, techno-sphere and psycho-spherical, therefore constituting a complex totality with which one can learn that the World can be, effectively, a different one. The contradictory movement inherent in its socio-territorial dynamic also continues to happen, challenging the set of adversities linked to change that

the dominated and oppressed classes long for. As highlighted by Castilho (2017a), one must respect the environment's complexity in the way it is inherent to the specific features of the territorial formation of the Brazilian people as a collective and, as written by Passet (2002), follow enlightened principles of care for nature, in its natural and social forms.

It is within the above-mentioned psycho-spherical movement that resides, therefore, not only the hope for conquering social well-being for the totality of places in the World, always valuing the territorialities in those places. At the same time, herein resides the opportunity to imagine other possible worlds, within which Acosta (2016), having criticized the limitations of the social project for the Welfare State, deeply debated the idea of better living, basing himself on the teachings of the autochthonous peoples of the Latin American continent.

Conclusion

Along the history of capitalism in Brazil, the place in which the way of production-circulation-consumption has become increasingly perverse, the interests of the dominant classes, guided by their economic greed, have expanded through the World, violating all coveted territories in order to shape them to their proposals.

All the same, history is not such a linear process, but contradictory, sparking tensions and conflicts which are capable of – when they are strong enough and consciously revised by their activists – reverting, at least in terms of their potential, the violation of historically constructed territories and territorialities constructed in the spaces where dominated and oppressed people live.

The fear of losing privileges, coupled with the centuries-old hate of the dominant classes in relation to those who are dominated

and oppressed, has orientated attitudes of denial of rights, killing and criminalization of such movements. Nevertheless, reactions to oppressive power have continued to occur. The outcome of this process will only be able to be effectively demonstrated by the permanent movement of History.

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