

CAN WE TALK ABOUT GENTRIFICATION IN FAVELAS? CASE STUDY ON URBAN REQUALIFICATION IN BAIRRO DA PAZ

PODEMOS FALAR DE GENTRIFICAÇÃO EM FAVELAS? ESTUDO DE CASO ACERCA DA REQUALIFICAÇÃO URBANA NO BAIRRO DA PAZ

¿PODEMOS HABLAR DE GENTRIFICACIÓN EN FAVELAS? ESTUDIO DE CASO DE REQUALIFICACIÓN URBANA EN BAIRRO DE LA PAZ

Maria Gabriela HITA¹
Emilly Mascarenhas COSTA²

ABSTRACT: The article discusses the use of the gentrification concept in contexts of land valuation in territories on the urban periphery that undergo socio-spatial transformations resulting from the intervention of public authorities, private initiative and complex processes of real estate speculation. Transformations also impacted by the struggles of social movements, which in an Afro-descendant Bahia manifest unique sociocultural characteristics and dimensions. First, the term gentrification is revised in order to further develop how the presence of gentrifying agents in the local transformation of Brazilian cities also occurs in peripheral areas, impacting in a peculiar manner the way of life in these places. From the analysis of an ethnographic case study in the city of Salvador-BA, we analyze the main impacts that a process of land regulation in a popular neighborhood has on this kind of “gentrification”, illustrating how processes of certain “bourgeoisization” begins to its interior.

KEYWORDS: Gentrification. Cities. Urban policies. Socio-spatial segregation. Bairro da Paz.

RESUMO: *O artigo discute o uso do conceito gentrificação em contextos de valorização do solo em territórios de periferia urbana cujas transformações socioespaciais resultam da influência do poder público, iniciativa privada e complexos processos de especulação imobiliária. As mudanças em muitas destas periferias são também impactadas por lutas de movimentos sociais, que, numa Bahia afrodescendente, manifestam características e dimensões socioculturais singulares. Primeiramente se revisa o termo gentrificação para, a seguir, desenvolver como a presença de agentes gentrificadores na transformação local das cidades brasileiras também ocorre em zonas periféricas, impactando de modo peculiar a vida desses lugares. A partir do estudo de caso de teor etnográfico na cidade de Salvador, capital do estado da Bahia, analisamos os principais impactos de um processo de regulação*

¹ Federal University of Bahia (UFBA), Salvador – BA – Brazil. Titular professor of the Department of Sociology, Postgraduate Program in Social Sciences (PPGCS), and the Interdisciplinary Studies on Women, Gender and Feminism (PPGNEIM). PQ2-CNPQ at the Center for Studies on Bodies, Sensitivities and Environments (ECSAS). PhD in Social Sciences (UNICAMP). ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5865-7334>. E-mail: mghita63@gmail.com.

² Federal University of Bahia (UFBA), Salvador – BA – Brazil. Doctoral student of the Postgraduate Program in Social Sciences (PPGCS) at UFBA. Master’s in Social Sciences (PPGCS-UFBA). ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9539-1061> E-mail: emillymascarenhas@gmail.com



fundiária em bairro popular sobre este tipo de gentrificação, ilustrando o processo de “aburguesamento” que vem ocorrendo na região.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: *Gentrificação. Cidades. Políticas urbanas. Segregação socioespacial. Bairro da Paz.*

RESUMEN: *El artículo discute el uso del concepto de gentrificación en contextos de valoración del suelo en territorios de periferia urbana que sufren transformaciones socioespaciales resultantes de la intervención de las autoridades públicas, la iniciativa privada y procesos complejos de especulación inmobiliaria. Transformaciones también impactadas por las luchas de los movimientos sociales, que en una Bahía afrodescendiente manifiestan características y dimensiones socioculturales únicas. Primero, se revisa el término gentrificación para desarrollar aún más cómo la presencia de agentes gentrificantes en la transformación local de las ciudades brasileñas también ocurre en áreas periféricas, impactando de manera peculiar la forma de vida en estos lugares. A partir del análisis de un estudio de caso etnográfico en la ciudad de Salvador-BA, analizamos los principales impactos que un proceso de ordenamiento territorial en un barrio popular sobre este tipo de “gentrificación”, ilustrando como ciertos procesos de cierta “burguesización” se inician a su interior.*

PALABRAS CLAVE: *Gentrificación. Cidades. Políticas urbanas. Segregación socioespacial. Barrio de Paz.*

Introduction

The concept of gentrification has been widely used by several areas of knowledge to explain and understand socio-spatial transformations in old urban centers that undergo requalification processes through actions of the public power and the private initiative. In this article, we seek to analyze the current processes of socio-spatial transformation that have taken place in the city of Salvador-BA in recent years, in view of the actions of public-private initiatives and their possible impacts on peripheral communities. In this way, we seek to reflect: are these actions of requalification of peripheries likely to be related to gentrification processes? Or still, can we talk about gentrification in urban peripheries?

We will seek to answer these questions through the analysis of the case study that has been developed in Bairro da Paz (BP) since 2005, emphasizing the period 2013-2016, the initial years of the implementation of the Program Casa Legal (PCL). This program met demands for land regularization by the Municipality of Salvador (PMS) during the



governments of Antônio Carlos Magalhães Neto (ACM Neto)³. Through the implementation of the PCL, we aim to discuss the use of the concept of gentrification in processes of spatial and real estate valuation of originally peripheral neighborhoods, highlighting the importance of the effects that public and/or private actions produce in transforming the city and, therefore, consequently, the urban and sociocultural life of these places.

In recent years, the BP and its surroundings have undergone significant changes through actions of urban requalification and expansion of the public transport network, which affect the physical space and the socioeconomic and cultural composition of the community. We believe that such factors can be associated with a new mode of gentrification, even though this process occurs in a subtle and gradual way.

Part of the studies on the subject defend the inseparable relationship between the development of cities and the uses of their spaces with interests and processes of production/reproduction of capital, which configures and organizes territories across the globe. The urban growth in Latin America was marked by the displacement of the working classes from the urban centers to the peripheries, due to the housing cost of the central regions, occupied by the wealthier classes. The prototype of residential occupation in cities around the world has been transformed: increasingly, the middle and upper classes have occupied regions further away from the city center in search of greater security and quality of life (CALDEIRA, 2000).

This movement tends to be accompanied by a reduction in investments in these regions, intensifying with the increase in occupation by residents with lower purchasing power. The gentrification processes are part of new types of transformations that have taken place in the central regions of the city that seek to revalue these central spaces. The term is used to describe processes of urban requalification in neighborhoods that were “abandoned” and neglected by the government and real estate capital in the various processes of urban expansion, which, recently, have again attracted the attention of these economic groups that seek to ennoble them, with the intuition that they will once again be occupied and/or frequented by wealthier social classes, or even by tourists (SMITH, 2007; LEITE, 2002).

From the premise that not only the old and/or historic centers have gone through processes of valuation whose tendency is to increase the cost of local living, transforming the socioeconomic profile of its residents, this article aims to discuss the uses of the term

³ Data collected in the research project coordinated by Hita: *Impacto da Implantação do PCL e da Base Comunitária de Segurança no Bairro da Paz (2013-2017)* and Dissertation carried out by Costa (2017): *Casa Legal: estudo de caso sobre o Programa de regularização fundiária em Salvador-Ba.*



gentrification with the aim to include in this debate processes of ennoblement of regions originally occupied by poorer populations⁴ that have been attracting speculative interests from real estate capital and the private sector. In this way, we use the concept to account for processes of revaluation and requalification in popular neighborhoods, regardless of how far they are from the historic center and/or previous occupation by wealthier classes than those who currently reside there. Hita and Gledhill (2010) use the terminology “low-level gentrification” to support the transformations that have taken place in the BP, when comparing it with what occurs in the Old Center of Salvador. Through this comparison, it is noticeable that both locations – the old center of Salvador and the BP – share common characteristics and many differences. In these terms, for them:

The future of places like Bairro da Paz could be considered as a kind of “low-level gentrification”, if one considers the basis for the removal of residents from areas of environmental risk and the growing trend towards an increasing concentration of property in the hands of new residents with better jobs and higher incomes (HITA; GLEDHILL, 2010, p. 55, our translation).

Gentrification: revisiting the term

The concept of gentrification was first used by Ruth Glass (2018), in the 1960s, to describe the return of the middle classes to the urban centers of London, abandoned by the residential suburbanization of the wealthier classes. Highly related to urban and housing transformation processes in Anglo-Saxon countries, gentrification can be defined as a physical, socioeconomic and cultural phenomenon, related to processes of reinvestment and revaluation of areas abandoned by the middle and upper classes in the different processes of urban expansion (BIDOU-ZACHARIESEN, 2006; SMITH, 2006; 2007; MOURAD, FIGUEIREDO; BALTRUSIS, 2014; RIBEIRO, 2014).

The processes of urban expansion in Latin America differ from those in Anglo-Saxon countries, which is why most scholars defend the restriction of the term in Latin American cities. Ribeiro (2014) points out that, despite the need for care to avoid emptying the concept, its plastering can be as wrong as careless application. In this article, the term gentrification is thought of as the process of valuing areas occupied by low-income populations in spaces of high real estate value, regardless of whether these are old/historical centers of the city.

⁴ The term periphery must be understood in its social connotation, referring to the idea of precariousness and lack of urban infrastructure and services. Regarding spatial location, the BP is currently located in “a new centrality of the city” of Salvador (HITA, 2017; 2020; SANTOS, 2013).



Socio-spatial segregation is a striking feature in Brazilian cities, although its manifestation occurs through different patterns throughout the country's urbanization. The classic bibliography calls 'center-periphery' the housing model in which the middle and upper classes remained in urban centers, while workers were forced to look for cheaper alternatives to housing, migrating to the edges of the city. Currently, several researchers, among them Caldeira (2000), have indicated the modification of the housing pattern in Brazilian cities, in which the wealthy classes increasingly distance themselves from urban centers, preferring to live in closed condominiums. This movement creates a new face for the socio-spatial segregation of the city, in which luxury condominiums border favelas⁵. These processes tend to devalue the city centers, which have come to be occupied by lower classes while they have suffered from the neglect of public authorities. In this sense, several studies on gentrification concern processes encouraged by the State, in partnership with the private sector, whose articulations aim to revalue these regions, thus seeking, through reinvestments, to attract new residents and consumers to these places.

Over the years, the concept of gentrification has been used to account for different processes of reoccupation of spaces by the middle and upper classes, in which we can see the transformation of different social and cultural uses of urban space due to the greater promotion of conviviality and consumption through the multiplication of establishments such as boutiques, restaurants, cafes, among many other spaces more frequented by people from the middle and upper classes. These new spaces also aim to attract tourists and new residents of the city, especially those with greater purchasing power, mobilized by the new sociability and all the cultural and historical capital that starts to be updated in these places (LEITE, 2002; CRIEKINGEN, 2006).

We defend that gentrification can be presented as a physical, economic, social and cultural phenomenon, referring to the changes caused by the residential structure, without being restricted to changes in the socioeconomic profile (BIDOU-ZACHARIESEN, 2006). The concept can be useful to analyze and understand urban transformations through structural and economic relationships, even those that seek to understand it from individual or collective actors attracted by the ways of life and consumption referring to the different centers and spaces of the city.

⁵ Although the study by Caldeira (2000) focuses on the city of São Paulo-SP, it is worth mentioning that this pattern of urban growth has become quite common in Salvador-BA. We can cite as an example the Bairro da Paz, which has been surrounded by an increasing number of gated communities.



The processes of transformation of urban space can be understood more broadly from the relationship between production and capital. The real estate market becomes a fundamental element to understand the dynamics of occupying and producing the and in the urban space. Neil Smith (2006; 2007) explains the dynamics of devaluation/valuation of spaces through the concept of “rent gap”⁶, a term that can help us understand the articulation of the market and the State in the different processes of valuation of territories. If the gentrifying agents brought by Ruth Glass (2018) were individual actors interested in returning to certain regions of the city occupied by poorer residents, currently, the State and the market have played a fundamental role in urban gentrification processes.

The State has played a central role in the processes of urban valuation/devaluation through the implementation and development of public policies that aim to value certain regions of the city, transforming them into more attractive spaces and fostered by the growth of public-private partnerships. These partnerships have worked together and consistently for the development of modern cities increasingly inserted in neoliberal, competitive and strategic logics. The participation of the State and the market as gentrifying agents connect local transformations with those of the global economy, changing gentrification into a worldwide phenomenon (BIDOU-ZACHARIASEN, 2006; SMITH, 2007; 2006, MOURAD; FIGUEIREDO; BALTRUSIS, 2014).

Gentrification should not be understood as a homogeneous phenomenon, the differences of each location need and should be considered, however one cannot lose sight of the transforming pattern of the urban that connects these places to other cities in the world and to the global economy. In this way, this article seeks to expand and adapt the use of the term to different realities, given that we understand that the concept of gentrification can be used both to understand processes of requalification of former elite neighborhoods and to deal with the functional change of old industrial/workers neighborhoods and their social transformations, indicating the existence of two types of “bourgeoisness”. The first one occurs through the exclusion of popular categories, while the second is due to the arrival of wealthier people in areas that were, until then, socially mixed or popular. The concept of gentrification is used, in most studies, to account for processes related to “bourgeoisness”, arising from the arrival of wealthier social strata in peripheral areas (BIDOU-ZACHARIASEN, 2006).

Urban requalification has been taken as the main guideline for thinking about government actions in peripheral communities, replacing formerly recurring hygiene policies.

⁶ Smith (2006) points out that processes of expansion of cities to their margins cause the real estate devaluation of these urban centers and the appreciation of the suburbs.s.



The greater tolerance for the permanence of peripheral communities in certain regions of the city does not imply their greater insertion/acceptance in the city. Even today, these spaces are identified by most of the city's population as a locus of violence and criminality. It is not our place here to enter into the discussion about public security or the level of crime in Brazilian peripheries, however, we cannot fail to highlight the relevance and challenges of actions aimed at pacifying favelas - the Pacifying Police Units (UPPs), in Rio de Janeiro, with equivalence, in Bahia, to the Community Security Bases (BSC) – in processes that aimed to revalue and requalify such communities. In the case of Salvador, the implementation of BCS associated with land regulation programs is part of broader urban requalification projects in some cities. This association of factors is, as a rule, the gateway to these “low-level gentrification” processes (FLEURY; OST, 2013; FREEMAN; BURGOS, 2015; HITA; GLEDHILL, 2010).

In this sense, we argue that the use of the concept of gentrification adapted to these new contexts illuminates processes of socio-spatial and cultural transformation that occur in popular neighborhoods, such as BP, as well as others in spaces that have been undergoing gradual changes in the composition of their residents, intensified by the processes of real estate speculation, even when these neighborhoods continue to be recognized as places of poverty. Through this premise, we will discuss the changes arising from urban policies that have occurred in the BP and surroundings since the beginning of the occupation, in the 1980s, in order to discuss the impacts of changes in the neighborhood and in the lives of its residents.

Bairro da Paz: between the margins of urban requalification and the center of Afro-Bahian popular culture

The privileged location and the history of struggle and resistance to the attempts of community removals make Bairro da Paz (BP) a privileged locus to support our hypothesis of requalification in peripheral areas, which, with the growing real estate and urban valuation in the region, must be thought of as a gentrification process, due to the socio-spatial transformations of these places and their neighborhoods. The BP is located on the banks of Avenida Luís Viana Filho, popularly known as Avenida Paralela, where one of the main axes of urban expansion in Salvador was consolidated in the 1970s (SCHEINOWITZ, 1998). The neighborhood, initially called the Malvinas invasion, emerged in the early 1980s from the irregular occupation of private land that came to be appropriated by the Municipality of Salvador (PMS), due to taxes not paid by the original owners. The public domain of the land



did not eliminate the conflict, still latent, over the occupation of that region of the city, a process that occurred, in the past, through violent attacks by the public power to prevent the residents from occupying the space where BP is today.

Older residents and leaders narrate the constant struggle waged against the public authorities to guarantee the right to housing in that part of the city. Such clashes, among other consequences, resulted in the expropriation and transfer of residents to the Subúrbio Ferroviário region. But the Falklands lands were always reoccupied, by old and new residents, who won the right to stay in the neighborhood around 1987, during the government of Waldir Pires, when it became known as Bairro da Paz in allusion the result of this resistance and conquest⁷ (ALCÂNTARA, 2005; HITA; DUCCINI, 2007; HITA, 2012; COSTA. 2017).

Since then, the struggle for recognition, dignity and the right to be part of the city of Salvador have been part of the history of the place. Likewise, there was a strong effort from residents to oppose the stigma of violence received by the other inhabitants of Salvador. Among other actions, this process took place through the construction of positive cultural identities and constant demand for rights to full citizenship. Struggles and resistances in Afro-Bahian favelas, like those that characterize the cultural and political identities of the BP, are marked by racial and class dimensions, and cannot be dissociated from the processes of struggle in Afro-descendant Bahia and the emergence of a new type community, racial and cultural identity. A significant part of BP's most recognized leaders are young people and members of Afro-Bahia cultural groups, whose actions and performances fall within the boundaries of essential themes to those of a sociology of culture. Afro-Bahian culture that operates as a privileged background from which most residents act, transit, identify, live the city and build their ways of manifesting, fighting and resisting.

Many of the leaders self-identify as “black” and are sympathizers or activists of the Unified Black Movement; another significant part of its residents make up a wide variety of cultural groups and Afro-Bahian popular culture, with a strong approximation to the culture of the people of santo and *terreiros de candomblé*⁸. It is through claiming the role and value of popular culture produced in the community that most of the leaders working in the BP (self)organize to react to stigma and social exclusion. Other elements are fundamental to the cultural and sociopolitical construction of the BP, which receives transnational influences, including international black groups, such as the United States. In addition, it is worth

⁷ The term alludes to the Falklands War, which took place in the same period in which the occupation began..

⁸ For more on these BP cultural groups and their complex relationships with public authorities, politics, national and international Afro identities, as well as the ways in which they connect and move in the city and its main networks of sociability, clientelism and politics, see Azevedo (2017).



considering the presence of different religious groups in addition to those of African origin, such as the Catholic, Evangelical and Spiritist Centers that make up, alongside the residents, sociocultural changes in the community over the years. These groups have exerted a potential influence on the daily life and on the sociability of their members, changing their ways of relating, dressing and behaving. Among such groups, disputes are fought both in the micro and macro-social space of the BP. The clashes, however, do not prevent the union of residents of the most diverse creeds and ideologies to defend collective interests at crucial moments in the history of the community.

In the recent past, many of these struggles took place through demonstrations on Paralela Av., where leaders and residents occupied the space expressing their demands, this was a privileged way for the BP to claim and make itself noticed due to the ability to paralyze the flow of vehicle traffic on one of the main roads in the city. This way of expressing itself is remembered with some nostalgia by many leaders, who lament the loss of the Avenida space and the impacts caused by the marches, since new urban mobility works changed the use and type of access to Paralela, which became mediated by parallel, smaller and more internal streets that allow slower access to neighborhood entrances. For Agier (2011), the street is the space for the manifestation of cultural, political and reinvention dimensions. The manifestations and struggles for the right to the city – characteristics of the ways in which BP leaders and residents are mobilized – can be understood as part of these dimensions and the practices that are inherent to them and also typical of cities⁹. From the streets, actors produce culture and new political acts. Agier (2011) connects art, performance and politics in his studies of the **anthropology of the city**, which is also an **anthropology of rituals**, since, for this author, the productions of ritual acts and performances that create new meanings can be apprehended under two modalities: the forms of interpretation and those of representation. Ritual is an identifier and symbolic mediator of interpretation and representation and can transform a multitude of individuals into “a community”. This is what happens in street fights and demonstrations, in moments of political articulation that characterize the ways of acting, fighting and resisting BP residents and leaders, giving them a sense and feeling of belonging, marked by inherently fleeting and cultural qualities, but also, and above all, politics (KRUGER; AGIER 2011). Therefore, when referring from now on to the struggles and resistance of the BP, we are alluding to this special way in which its residents act, socialize, live and produce culture.

⁹ BP's political manifestations are also promoted by many of its artists. In cities, the streets have been a privileged stage to express oneself, to manifest, as well as a space for sociability and sharing.



Since 2005, when our research team started contacts with BP, we have witnessed several moments when leaders and residents came together to face different threats of possible removals arising from various spatial transformations around the community. However, we only saw expropriations between 2014 and 2016. Such evictions illuminate what we consider to be the most noticeable beginning of the gentrification process in that region of the Bahian capital (HITA; GLEDHILL, 2010; HITA, 2012, HITA, 2017; 2020; COSTA, 2017).

The first of these was the removal of about seventy houses from the front of the neighborhood due to the duplication works on Av. Orlando Gomes and construction of Av. 29 de março— projects carried out by the State Government, under the responsibility of the State of Bahia Urban Development Company (CONDER), whose main objectives were to improve urban mobility works. In addition to this work, the second project was developed by PMS to start macro-drainage and requalification works in the Beira Rio Street region, an area located on the banks of the Jaguaribe River, in the stretch of the river that passes through the BP. This project initially involved the expropriation of approximately thirty dwellings located on the banks of the river. Despite this action by the city hall, until the year 2017, the data from our surveys point to a significant growth in the number of new homes in this same region of the neighborhood: at least one hundred new hovels were built in the unoccupied area. And up to 300 by 2021.

It is worth noting the fact, pointed out by community leaders, that the project of expropriation of houses in Beira Rio responds to the interests and efforts of residents of middle/upper class condominiums, which border this region of the BP¹⁰. This location is also not included in the polygonal delimited by the PMS as Special Zones of Social Interest (ZEIS) of the BP. The Zeis are a legal and land regulation tool that can help to legitimize informal occupations throughout the country, helping inhabitants of these locations to have their right to remain in the territory guaranteed, as well as access to better quality and quantity of goods and services. This type of urban requalification processes is, a priori, one of the main objectives to be achieved by contemporary land tenure regularization processes. This is the case of the Casa Legal Program (PCL) whose initial objective was to regularize the land situation of around 30,000 families in an irregular housing situation throughout the city of Salvador. In the first quarter of 2013, BP was chosen to be the pilot community for the implementation of this program. Another 18 neighborhoods were covered by the PCL: Bate Coração, Fazenda Coutos, Nova Constituinte, Águas Claras, Nova Brasília do Aeroporto,

¹⁰ For more details see: Hita (2017; 2020) and Costa (2017).



Nova Brasília de Itapuã, Canabrava, Fazenda Grande do Retiro, Baixa do Camuruji, Mata Escura, IAPI, Engomadeira, Alto do Coqueirinho, Alto da Esperança, Amazonas, Gamboa de Baixo and Solar do Unhão, Arraial do Retiro and Boca do Rio.

Land tenure regularization is a way of urbanizing informal areas or areas of irregular occupation and must be followed, a priori, by processes of greater requalification. In general, in the guidelines that guide urban policies, the delivery of the title must be followed or accompanied by the improvement of services and equipment, aiming at the greater integration of these communities with the formal city. In this sense, land tenure regularization plays an important role among public power actions in urban socio-spatial valorization, as well as for the observation of small changes brought to the lives of residents and the possible impacts that may arise as a result of this type of policy.

Until 2016, only the houses that were included within the ZEIS polygonal were regularized; properties outside this region, as well as those in risk areas, such as those in Beira Rio, could not benefit from the land tenure regularization program. It is worth noting that the process of titling these houses is closely related to the registration of residences in municipal bodies. This is the main argument used by the Municipality of Salvador (PMS) to attract beneficiaries to the PCL, due to the possibility that several of these properties may be transferred by inheritance, rented or sold on a regular basis, in the near future. Something that was supposedly forbidden to them before.

Residents and leaders report the increase in the number of houses that are now subject to the Urban Property and Territorial Tax (IPTU) after the implementation of the PCL, as well as the significant increase in this tax in residences that already paid this tax annually. In this sense, the IPTU collection appears in the course of the research carried out as an element that deserves attention, since a large number of the interviewed residents complained about the exorbitant amounts charged, saying that they do not match the socioeconomic reality of the community, nor with the space where live, from ZEIS. This type of information from extensive field work makes us defend the hypothesis that the increase in residential costs, whether due to higher IPTU taxation or the inclusion of these residents in regular and official use of piped water and electricity, in the long term, it can lead the poorest residents of the neighborhood to have to abandon these houses and seek other alternatives for more affordable housing, either within the same neighborhood in more precarious shacks, or in more distant and peripheral neighborhoods where many will tend to be relocated. Especially if they are beneficiaries of programs such as *Minha Casa Minha Vida*, associated with many processes of evictions and land regulation underway in the BP.



The physical aspect of the neighborhood also showed changes over the years in which our research was developed, some of these changes were promoted by the action of the Municipality of Salvador (PMS), such as the *Morar Melhor Program* (PMM), which took place in parallel to the PCL. One of the PMM's actions was to carry out renovations of up to R\$ 5,000 (five thousand reais) per household to requalify houses in a precarious state in popular neighborhoods of Salvador. Representatives of the City Hall claimed that the renovations in the benefited residences would solve fundamental structural problems, such as ceiling repairs and construction of bathrooms. In turn, this program was strongly criticized by many BP leaders, especially those who oppose the current management of the PMS, for not considering the residents' claims about the real needs of real estate renovation. For these leaders, this entire process of refurbishing some houses took place in an arbitrary and electoral way, using low quality materials and prioritizing the painting of the facades of the houses much more than their internal structural problems, as they had alleged. Through 30 interviews carried out with PCL beneficiaries, and participant observation in meetings and negotiations between PCL leaders and bureaucrats, throughout the implementation process, it was possible to verify that the PMM (*Morar Melhor*) renovations were carried out in houses that were inside the polygonal and in front areas of the neighborhood, especially those located in regions that could be seen from Paralela Av., beautifying the view of the neighborhood for tourists arriving from the Airport and crossing the Paralela to reach the downtown.

Therefore, we argue that long-term public-private actions may also transform the socioeconomic and housing profile of this community without, therefore, losing sight of the significant transformation of the urban space of the Neighborhood from the 1980s to the present day, also resulting from the recognized struggle of this community for the urbanization of the place. The presence of the State has been installed in these communities through basic services such as social assistance, education, health, etc., which were – and still have been – central demands of the residents. In the BP, the state power has been more present through the installation of permanent police centers, such as the BCS, installed in the neighborhood since 2012.

If, on the one hand, we have the presence of the private sector and the real estate market, transforming Bairro da Paz into a large peripheral island surrounded by gated communities for the upper classes. On the other hand, we have the action of the public power modifying the surroundings of the community and making it increasingly accessible. It is not new in studies and research on urban expansion the importance of occupying peripheral regions for the development of the urban fabric, since, from there, the public power forced to

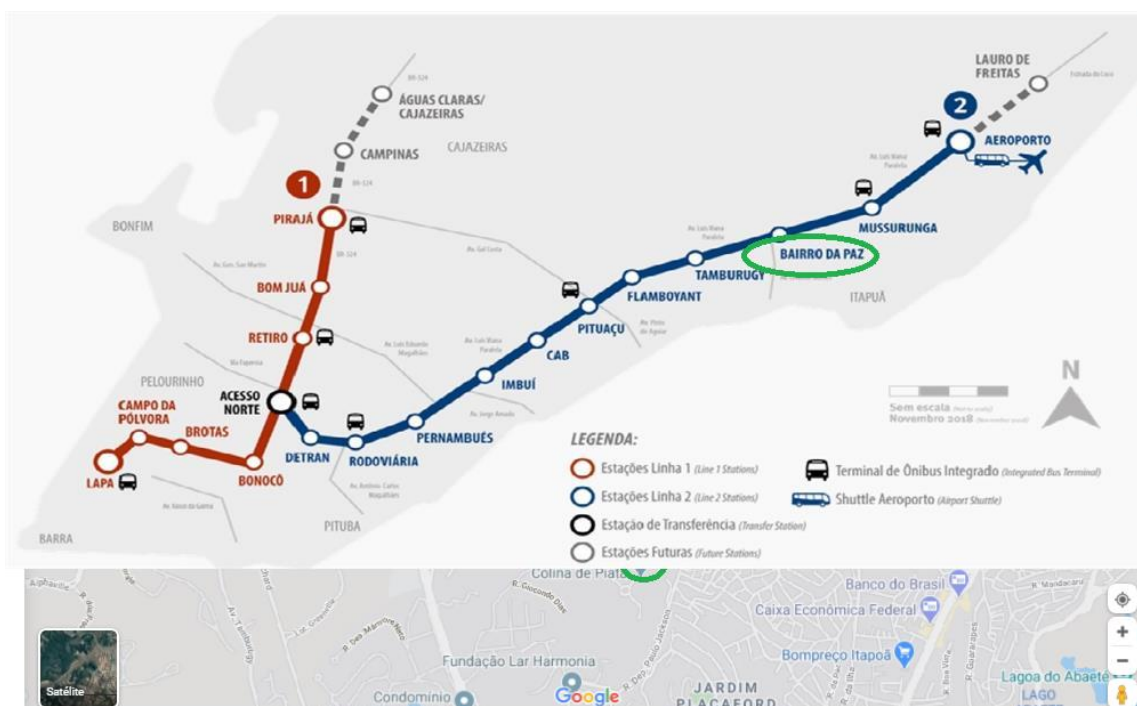


invest in mobility, services and infrastructure, would, therefore, end up by value vacant land, which, after the benefits, could be sold at significantly higher prices (CALDEIRA, 2000; GORDILHO-SOUZA, 2000; ROLNIK, 2006; HOLSTON, 2013; CARVALHO; PEREIRA, 2014).

Below, we point out other recent transformations that have taken place around the BP. If during our visits to the countryside there were frequent reports about the difficulties of transport for the residents, a subway station was recently installed nearby, whose nomenclature refers to the name of the neighborhood. The BP subway station was inaugurated in the second half of 2017, and along with it, we can see several works that change the vision of the neighborhood for those who arrive. The requalification of the Jaguaribe River, the renovations of the front of the community by the PMM and a walkway that has a very high structure, today seem to disguise the air of periphery that characterized the community.

The name of the subway station draws attention especially due to the visibility that is now achieved by the community that, historically, has struggled with the stigma of being one of the largest favelas in the city. Reports from residents and leaders about the prejudices experienced “in the city” when revealing to live in Bairro da Paz are not uncommon. Likewise, as residents of “the city” there were countless times when we heard alarmed comments about the violence in the Neighborhood.

Figure 1 – Salvador subway system (2018)



Source: CRR Metrô Bahia

When we look at Figure 1, which shows the map of Salvador with the projection of the subway system, we can observe two subway lines: line 1, which runs through the city's core and line 2, which runs through the Orla vector and connects the city to the Deputado Luís Eduardo Magalhães International Airport. It is interesting to note that, although other stations have the name of the neighborhoods they are close to, on line 2, Bairro da Paz is one of the few peripheral communities whose station highlights its name, along with the Pernambués and Mussurunga stations that are consolidated for a much longer time and that have always had greater ease of integration and access to the rest of the “city”.

Another element that deserves to be highlighted is the history that the BP has in relation to the nomenclature of streets, squares, public institutions and even the neighborhood itself. It was born with the name of Malvinas and fought to become Bairro da Paz, in order to lose the negative connotation that the name related to the Falklands War had. Currently, squares and streets in the neighborhood allude to the history of struggle and cultural identities of the community, whose residents fought for the right to the city. Examples of toponyms of Bairro da Paz are names such as *Resistência Street*, *Praça das Decisões*, *Praça da Paz*, among other places and names of public institutions with direct reference to the days of struggle of the community. They also honor illustrious figures from Bairro da Paz, as in the case of Mestre Paulo dos Anjos High School, honoring an outstanding capoeira master who lived in the neighborhood (HITA, 2012).

In this sense, it is worth observing carefully what it means for Bairro da Paz to name the subway station that is located in its mediations. It is indisputable that a nearby metro station offers mobility and access advantages that did not exist before. However, at the same time that the station solves a serious problem, the poor accessibility and integration of the BP with the rest of the city, can be an attractive element for residents with a higher socioeconomic profile than the usual residents of the community, generating a possible real estate valuation and making it difficult for poorer residents to stay.

It is not exclusive to Bairro da Paz the extinction of many of the bus lines that circulated between the neighborhoods before the operation of subway transport. In the case of BP, we can observe that the road transport lines that connected the neighborhood directly with other regions of the city were removed, reducing mobility options. Currently, in the BP, there are only lines to Mussurunga Station, the most important bus and subway station in the region. Despite the greater ease of travel provided to BP residents by the subway station located on the margins of the community, we cannot ignore the fact that it reduced the possibilities of travel to other neighborhoods in Salvador without the need for integration with



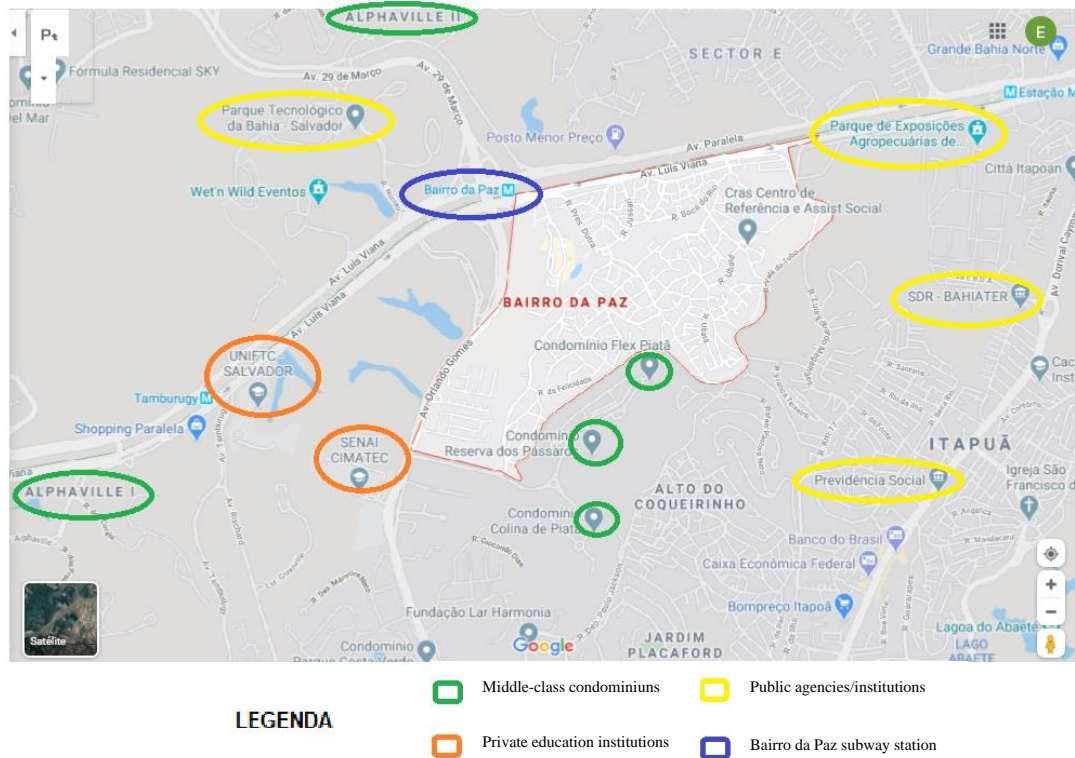
the subway. It is worth, therefore, to question and analyze in a more qualitative and in-depth way the effects of the arrival of the subway in Bairro da Paz for residents of different areas, from the more central and consolidated ones, located within the ZEIS polygonal, to those more distant, more difficult to access. Would the BP Station have, in fact, improved the integration and mobility of the entire BP community and residents?

If, on the one hand, the subway increases integration and urban mobility through public transport, on the other hand, the large territorial extension of the neighborhood, when combined with the removal of bus lines, can be a hindrance in the locomotion of residents of more peripheral regions within the community and to other more distant areas of the neighborhood. This is because access to buses, which was already problematic and presented significant intervals, after the reduction of lines had its passages increasingly time consuming.

The process of local development of Bairro da Paz, as seen, was gradual and, currently, the residents have equipment and services that improve the quality of life, when compared to the beginning of the occupation in the 1980s. Despite the expropriation menace seems to have disappeared, other ways of voluntarily evicting more vulnerable residents are noticeable, due to the need to reduce housing costs. That is why we argue that gentrification has reinvented itself and adapted itself to new urban scenarios, now operating in the growing peripheries.



Figure 2 – Neighborhood of Peace and its surroundings



Source: Google Maps (2021)

Based on the transformations observed over the years of research in Bairro da Paz, especially in the central region and recognized as ZEIS, as well as in several other studies - some cited in this work - we defend the need to rethink the use of the term gentrification within the molds and urban transformations that occur in large Latin American cities.

So, can one speak of gentrification?

Despite being a peripheral neighborhood and presenting many of the problems common to this type of context, during the years of our research in the place, no interviewee showed an explicit desire to want to leave and move to other regions of the city. Despite this, in recent years, we have followed the departure of some residents and community leaders to other neighborhoods, some of them because they were benefited by the *Minha Casa Minha Vida* Program (PMCMV), others because their homes were expropriated by works that took place in the Beira Rio region. and in front of Paralela Av., in the years 2016 and 2014, respectively.

During the PCL implementation phase, discussions were common about the possibility of building a PMCMV housing project within the BP, so that some of the benefited residents

could continue living in the neighborhood. Despite the struggle of some leaders, who mapped possible regions where to allocate a housing project for the program in the community, there was no positive response from the government to this demand. Thus, the majority of residents benefiting from the PMCMV were relocated to other more distant and peripheral regions. Phrases such as “here is the best place to live”, pronounced by residents of different areas of the neighborhood, were common when asked about the desire to stay or go to live in other regions of the city. However, it caught our attention when given by a former resident of a highly valued middle-class neighborhood in the city. At the time of the interview, he said he preferred to live in BP, where he has some small and medium-sized companies and good friends.

Urban transformations and the arrival of goods and services to the BP are noticeable over the years. The community grew in step with the growth of the city and, above all, with the increasing occupation of Paralela Av. Despite the deficiencies and low quality of the service offered, the residents and leaders of BP are currently fighting another type of battle with the government. Unlike what happened in the first years of the occupation, when the struggles were based on the right to housing and permanence in the city's soil, current demands were transformed with the arrival of a new urban apparatus. Currently, the demands of the residents are more directed to the search for the quality of services and equipment offered, as well as in the negotiation in search of social counterparts that bring certain advantages to the neighborhood and its inhabitants. These counterparts do not necessarily materialize in offers of urban equipment and infrastructure, as sought after and desired. They often appear in the form of funding for professional training courses for the community or as more specific benefits for some of the Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) involved in the negotiation.

Despite the attempt and claim to build a MCMV housing complex within the BP for those who wanted to remain, it was noticeable that there was almost a consensus among the leaders that the removal of those houses was something already expected and even necessary for the good and better development of the city, region and even for the interests of the neighborhood as a whole. In this way, it is clear that many of the actions developed by the community today aim more at negotiating the best counterparts for the neighborhood before defending the interests of evicted families (HITA, 2017; 2020). If, on the one hand, the community has been going through a slow and subtle process of transformation, driven by urban policies that value the surroundings of the neighborhood, on the other hand, internal urban policies fulfill the role of making sure that residents are obliged to pay, each time more,



with the costs of improving the quality of life of their community and region, through the inclusion of residents in payments of fees, taxes and services, previously forgiven in order to reduce the cost of housing.

Although we do not rule out the possibility that homeowners may be taking advantage of the neighborhood's appreciation as a way of earning money by renting or selling their homes. In this article, the focus was to discuss public actions that make it impossible for poorer residents and more peripheral areas to stay in more urbanized and central centers of the city, such as those of the BP. We believe that some of these homes will be gradually expropriated for legitimate reasons, such as public need/utility or risk to the home. In parallel to this, the poorest residents of the BP residing within the polygonal may be expelled from the neighborhood without any expropriation actions, since, at a given moment, they will no longer be able to afford the costs of housing in the region, needing to look for cheaper and less valued regions to survive. In addition to the fact that the documentation delivered by the PCL allows them to transact business with the built property, such as sale or rent. In this way, we believe that only the most affluent residents with greater purchasing power will be able to maintain their residence in Bairro da Paz, which will increasingly receive residents of higher social classes.

It is almost a consensus among specialists on cities and urban policies that government actions tend to accompany the interests of capital, especially real estate and tourism. However, it is worth mentioning that urban social movements, strengthened at the end of the military dictatorship in Brazil, have been transforming the molds and guidelines of urban policies, starting to guide them in the search for the construction of more democratic and less unequal cities through participatory processes. The inclusion of political actors representing civil society does not, however, guarantee that urban policies are constructed with a view to ensuring the rights of urban citizens, nor their interests. This is why the effectiveness of social participation in the formulation and monitoring of public policies by these sectors of civil society is highly questionable. That is why it is necessary to be attentive to the subtleties that may deny recently conquered rights. In this sense, we believe that the gentrifying action of the public power and the private sector can arise through other molds besides those described by the traditional literature on the subject. Likewise, we need to update our perspectives on the places where such policies are being implemented and on their impacts in different locations.

Therefore, we argue that concepts such as gentrification not only serve to understand the resumption of requalification of old central/traditional regions by the middle classes, but can also help us to think and understand other transformations produced by public-private



actions in peripheral places, once impacted by hygienist policies and expropriation. The legal support for the permanence and right to the city of the residents of these areas, after the promulgation of the City Statute (2001) does not eliminate the socio-spatial differences or real estate interest in speculation regions. For this reason, we defend a more attentive and nuanced look at the analysis of processes experienced in needy communities and their surroundings, identifying who are the real beneficiaries of the set of urbanization and land regulation actions and their impacts on the poor and vulnerable.

In these terms, we believe that Bairro da Paz has been going through a discreet and slow process of gentrification, which may have the final consequence of reducing the central area of the neighborhood, which is demarcated by PMS as ZEIS. In this way, the neighborhood may undergo transformations not only in the total physical area, which may be further reduced by new and future expropriations under justifications such as environmental risks or public needs, but also in the type of internal social composition of those who leave, stay or arrive.

Transformations such as those described may lead the neighborhood to a slow process of greater “bourgeoisness”, even if, in the short and medium term, it is unlikely to be occupied by populations from the middle and upper classes. In this way, we believe that the concept of gentrification can help us to account for urban transformations that are different from those to which the phenomenon was restricted when it was first used by Ruth Glass (2018), given the social reality and cities going through significant transformations, which may imply the need to review new uses of some concepts.

REFERENCES

AGIER, M. **Antropologia da cidade**: lugares, situações, movimentos. São Paulo: Ed. Terceiro Nome, 2011.

ALCÂNTARA, D. **Das Malvinas ao Bairro da Paz**: história de uma luta pela função habitacional do território urbano. Salvador: FACOM/UFBA, 2005.

AZEVEDO, U. B. **Nas trilhas da cultura**: cidade, redes e trajetos de atores culturais negros do Bairro da Paz. Orientador: HITA. 2017. Dissertação (Mestrado em Ciências Sociais) – Universidade Federal da Bahia, 2017.

BIDOU-ZACHARIASEN, C. Introdução. *In*: BIDOU-ZACHARIASEN, C. (org.). **De volta à cidade**: dos processos de gentrificação às políticas de “revitalização” dos centros urbanos. São Paulo: Anablume, 2006.



BRASIL. **Estatuto da Cidade**: 2001. 3. ed. Brasília, DF, 2008. Available: <https://www2.senado.leg.br/bdsf/bitstream/handle/id/70317/000070317.pdf>. Access: 13 Feb. 2022.

CALDEIRA, T. P. R. **Cidade de muros**: crime, segregação e cidadania em São Paulo. São Paulo: Ed 34/ Edusp, 2000.

CARVALHO, I. M. M.; PEREIRA, G. C. Salvador como negócio. *In*: CARVALHO, I. M. *et al.* (org.). **Metrópoles na atualidade brasileira**: transformações, tensões e desafios da Região Metropolitana de Salvador. Salvador: EDUFBA, 2014.

COSTA, E. M. **Casa Legal**: Estudo de caso sobre o Programa de Regularização fundiária em Salvador-BA. Orientador: HITA, 2017. Dissertação (Mestrado em Ciências Sociais) – Universidade Federal da Bahia, 2017.

CRIEKINGEN, M. A gentrificação do bairro Saint-Georges em Lyon: a convivência de mobilidades diferenciadas. *In*: BIDOU-ZACHARIASEN, C. (org.). **De volta à cidade**: dos processos de gentrificação às políticas de “revitalização” dos centros urbanos. São Paulo: Anablume, 2006.

FLEURY, S.; OST, S. O Mercado sobe o Morro. A Cidadania Desce? Efeitos socioeconômicos da pacificação no Santa Marta. **Dados**, v. 56, n. 3, 2013.

FREEDAM, J.; BURGOS, M. Accumulation by forced removal: the thinning of Rio de Janeiro’s favelas in preparation for the games. **Journal of Latin American Studies**, v. 49, n. 5, p. 549-577, 2015.

GLASS, R. **Gentrificação**. FFLCH enciclopédia de antropologia – USP. 03 jul. 2018. Disponível em: <https://ea.fflch.usp.br/conceito/gentrificacao>. Acesso em: 13 fev. 2022.

GORDILHO-SOUZA, A. M. **Limites do Habitar**. Salvador: EDUFBA, 2000.

HITA, M. G. From Resistance Avenue to the Plaza of Decisions: New Urban Actors in Salvador, Bahia. *In*: GLEDHILL, J.; SHELL, P. (org.). **New Approaches to Resistance in Brazil and Mexico**. 1. ed. Durham Nth Caroline & London: Duke University Press, 2012. p. 269-288.

HITA, M. G.; DUCCINI, L. Da Guerra à Paz: o nascimento de um ator social no contexto da “Nova Pobreza” urbana em Salvador-Ba. **Caderno CRH**, v. 20, p. 281-297, 2007.

HITA, M. G.; GLEDHILL, J. E. Antropologia na análise de situações periféricas urbanas. **Cadernos Metrôpole**, São Paulo, v. 12, n. 23, p. 189-209, jan./jun. 2010.

HITA, M.G. Uma comunidade periférica da cidade de salvador: entre a requalificação urbana e a pacificação policial. *In*: GLEDHILL, J.; HITA, M.G.; PERELMAN, M. (org.). **Disputas em torno do espaço urbano**: processos de (re)produção/construção e apropriação da cidade. 2. ed. Ed UFBA, 2017 [2020]. p. 187-216.

HOLSTON, J. **Cidadania Insurgente**: disjunções da democracia e da modernidade no Brasil. São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 2013.



KRUGER, C.; AGIER, M. Antropologia da cidade: lugares, situações, movimentos [resenha]. **Campos**, v. 12, n. 1, p. 139-144, 2011.

LEITE, R. P. Contra-usos e espaço público: notas sobre a construção social dos lugares na Mangueira. **Revista Brasileira de Ciências Sociais**, v. 17, n. 49, p. 115-134, 2002.

MOURAD, L.; FIGUEIREDO, G. C.; BALTRUSIS, N. Gentrificação no 2 de Julho, em Salvador: modos, formas e conteúdos. **Cadernos da Metrópole**, v. 16, n. 32, nov. 2014.

RIBEIRO, D. A. Reflexões sobre o conceito e a ocorrência do processo de *gentrification* no Parque Histórico do Pelourinho, Salvador-BA. **Cadernos Metrôpoles**, São Paulo, v. 16, n. 32, p. 461-486, nov. 2014. Disponível em: <https://www.scielo.br/j/cm/a/pKHxHG8X9XTWW6ZkrVXMSGj/?lang=pt> . Acesso em: 10 fev. 2022.

ROLNIK, R. A construção de uma política fundiária e de planejamento urbano para o país - avanços e desafios. **Políticas Sociais: acompanhamento e análise**. 12 fev. 2006. Disponível em: https://www.ipea.gov.br/portal/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=5774&Itemid=9. Acesso em: 10 fev. 2022.

SANTOS, J. **A Cidade Poli(Multi)Nucleada**: a reestruturação do Espaço Urbano de Salvador. Salvador, Edufba, 2013.

SCHEINOWITZ, A.S. **O macroplanejamento da aglomeração de Salvador**. Salvador: Secretaria da Cultura e Turismo, EGBA, 1998.

SMITH, N. A gentrificação generalizada: de uma anomalia local à ‘regeneração’ urbana como estratégia urbana global. In: BIDOU-ZACHARIASEN, C. (org.). **De volta à cidade**: dos processos de gentrificação às políticas de “revitalização” dos centros urbanos. São Paulo: Anablume, 2006.

SMITH, N. Gentrificação, a fronteira e a reestruturação do espaço urbano. GEOUSP: **Espaço e Tempo**, São Paulo, n. 21, p. 15-31, 2007.

How to reference this article

HITA, M. G.; COSTA, E. M. Can we talk about gentrification in favelas? Case study on urban requalification in Bairro da Paz. **Estudos de Sociologia**, Araraquara, v. 27, n. esp. 1, e022004, Apr. 2022. e-ISSN: 1982-4718. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.52780/res.v27iesp1.15692>

Submitted: 16/01/2022

Required revisions: 65/02/2022

Approved: 30/03/2022

Published: 25/04/2022

