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THE CITY TRANSFORMS: "WE DIDN'T HAVE ANY OF THAT IN OUR HOUSE!"

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Abstract: Part of the conclusions of the thesis defended in 2017 at ``Universidade Federal do Ceará`` were analyzed when the migration of peasants to Sobral between 1950 and 1980, then the most populous city in the interior of Ceará according to IBGE-1950, was analyzed, aiming to understand the ways of migrants occupy and recreate the urban space and the state interventions that this space suffered in the period, when it was observed that the customs linked to the river that crosses the city were changing with sanitary modernization, affecting the values of the interviewees. Before the water went through sanitary treatment from the public water and sewage service and reached homes directly, washing clothes, taking a shower, getting water from the river while interacting with neighbors and friends was pleasurable and fun; With the changes, these habits began to be abandoned mainly due to the distance and awareness that the waters were contaminated. CERTEAU, 1994; HAESBAERT, 2005; SAQUET, 2010 and the migrants collaborated with the analysis of "space practices".

Keywords: History and memory; urban occupation; migration.

INTRODUCTION

This article was presented at 1st International Multidisciplinary Congress on the Urban: Brazilian Cities. Perspectives from the Global South took place from May 14 to 16, 2024 in GT 05 "Urban History" online format, already published in the conference proceedings¹. The objective was to present some of the problems raised in Chapter 5 of the thesis defended at ``Universidade Federal do Ceará`` in 2017, published in a book by NEA² in 2018 under the title: The paths of the sun: crossing paths in the city darkens the view (country-city migration).

We studied the migratory movement carried out by farmers living in municipalities located in the north countryside of Ceará³ to the city of Sobral, a movement that occurred between the 1950s and 1980s.

The city of Sobral in the period under study, namely between the 1950s and 1980s, partly because it occupied the position of second largest population in the state of Ceará according to the Brazilian Statistical Yearbook of 1950, published by the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics, and in partly because it remained among the 100 largest populations in Brazil at least until 1980, as observed in the study on Brazilian urbanization carried out by Milton Santos (2009). In effect, this city experienced more accelerated changes in its urban structure as a result of the economic policy implemented by the Superintendence for the Development of the Brazilian Northeast (SUDENE), an

1. Available at: <https://www.urbano2024.laboratoriosocial.com.br/informativo/view?TIPO=98ID_INFORMATIVO=88>. Accessed on Aug. 5, 2024, ISBN 978-65-982138-2-4.

2. New Academic Editions.

3. The current north and northwest mesoregions comprised the following microregions: countryside, Center, North, a group of 24 municipalities: Alcântaras, Apuiaries, Batoque, Canindé, Caridade, Cariré, Coreaú, Frecheirinha, General Sampaio, Groairas, Irauçuba, Itapagé, Massapê, Meruoca, Monsenhor Tabosa, Moraijo, Novas Russas, Paramonte, Pentecoste, Reriutaba, Santa Quitéria, Senador Sá, Sobral, Tamboril; Coast 18 municipalities: Acaraú, Aquiraz, Aracati; Beberibe; Bela Cruz; Camocim; Carnaubal; Caucaia; Chaval; Strength; Farm; Itapipoca; March; Martinópolis; Morrinhos; Pacajús; Paracuru, Santana do Acaraú; and Ibiapaba 12 municipalities: Carnaubal, Guaraciaba do Norte, Ibiapaba; Ipu; Ipueiras; Mucambo; Pacujá; Poranga; Saint Benedict; Tianguá; Ubajara; Viçosa do Ceará. (IBGE, 1960, p. 80; 90).

institution founded in 1959⁴, aiming at the economic and social development of this region and guiding solutions, through public financing in areas considered strategic,⁵ possibility from which this city directly benefited by corresponding to the standards designed for hub cities and regions.

These propositions, centralizing public resources, reached the state of Ceará mainly through tax incentives⁶ that supported the scope of Sudene, however, were added to other state projects indicated in the period that also operated in other hub areas created at the same time in the Northeast region, therefore, obviously, not just in Sobral.

We will not dwell on the government organization chart of the period, remembering that some of these issues have already been analyzed in the First Chapter of the thesis.

We are now interested in reflecting on the urban changes that have come to this city, especially those perceived by its residents as altering their daily lives, which have left marks on their routines, in this sense, on their lives, therefore, in their homes, streets, neighborhoods, on their journeys through the city, which began to form their demands, their needs, their expectations, experiences, memories, thus contributing, one could say, to its cultural change.

Therefore, we observed how these policies happened and how they were assimilated through the oral reports of migrants, in the journalistic narrative, in photographs, government reports, maps, in the city that obviously with its records, signs, detours, borders, new neighborhoods, renovations in old, categorization of residents, was taken as a source.

4. Instead of the GTDN Working Group for the development of the Northeast created in 1958, transformed into the Northeast Development Council (Codeno) later Sudene, a proposal from the Juscelino Kubitschek Government designed by the economist Celso Furtado.

5. For a critique of these propositions Celso Furtado in *“O Brasil Pós-Milagre”* (1981).

6. In the respective section, see Furtado (1989, p. 121) when he explains the creation of “[...] article 34 of Law number 3,995, of December 14, 1961, which approved the Master Plan” of SUDENE and why the “legislation later (law number: 4,239, of June 27, 1963, which approved the continuation of the Master Plan).

7. Weekly founded in 1918 by clergy from the diocese of Sobral.

Finally, we would like to clarify that transforming part of a chapter into an article is very difficult due to the risk of self-plagiarism, however transcriptions and recitations were inevitable including pages 180-181; 208 to 237 of the theses.

‘SOBRAL WILL GROW MORE IN 1968’

Never in a single year has OUR city announced so many investments and achievements at the same time, which together represent enough strength to boost the local economy once and for all. Cement Factory – Dairy Industry – Construction Material and Cashew Nut Processing Company, totaling NCr\$ 9,995,316.50. We will have Energy from Paulo Afonso – Banco da Bahia Branch and inaugurations of School Groups. An asphalt belt will make significant changes to the city’s outskirts when the *“Avenida do Contorno”* is built, which will divert heavy car traffic from the center. [...] We will have dozens of job opportunities and our roads will connect us with other more distant and marketable cities. We are, therefore, a city with a promising future. Sobral will be more Sobral. (EDITORIAL, 1968, p.1, emphasis added).

This article from the newspaper: *“Correio da Semana”*⁷ gives us indications that the population that migrated to Sobral during this period resorted to commerce on the outskirts of Sobral, the public market and factories because job opportunities in these sectors in addition to the provision of services were in evidence, with some initiatives were already known to those interviewed, as some derived from generations of farmers accustomed to trading their agricultural production,

or their leftovers, in the public market in Sobral, especially the residents of ``Serra da Meruoca`` and Ibiapaba, as was the case of Mr. João Emílio Vasconcelos.⁸

Returning to the weekly article that announced changes in the city's occupational system for 1968, therefore, the positive change in the economy of this city that would make it project itself towards a "promising future", following the advertisements and policies made available to northeastern cities considered development hubs, as already highlighted.⁹

However, exceeding the political propaganda expressed in this edition of the newspaper, other articles appeared proposing a solution to rural unemployment with another narrative that would overlap with the previous one, as it defended the modernization of work and agricultural production, and also the creation of concomitant rural jobs, which together would prevent the "exodus" of workers to urban centers, as we can see in ``Correio da Semana``.

[...] The dawn of the industrial era can be seen everywhere, including in the semi-arid and poor Northeast [...]. It is regrettable, however, that a corresponding movement has not occurred in relation to agriculture, which is still left to its own devices, employing routine methods. We forget that this activity rests on social well-being as well as the security of other wealth. [...] The rural owner cannot offer wages equal to those seen in urban centers. Agriculture does not allow this, due to the meager profits it provides. And the exodus takes place [...]. (ANDRADE, 1965, p. 4)

8. "We came to sell, sell things, flour here in Sobral, we need to come by train, we would wake up at dawn, go down, load the animals, bring them to Sobral to come and sell here. [...] I sold it here in Sobral, I left it just for spending there, to eat all the time, summer and winter, to make it only the next summer, [...]" (VASCONCELOS, 2013).

9. "Sobral already has several industries, but we still have a lot to expand in this field [...] Pudine designed and is helping to install three more, Lassa, Cosmac and Incassa. – The scarf industry is a pioneer [...]. As we are informed, other groups are interested in installing new industries in Princesa do Norte and to this end, they have already requested a market study from the Morris Asimov Project. [...]" (AGUIAR, L., 1967, p. 2).

10. "We have several highway and railway junctions here; the Meruoca and Grande Mountains supply us and make our Sobral the commercial center of the northern region [...]" (AGUIAR, L., 1967, p. 2).

11. See chapter 2 "On the paths of the countryside" from the topic "This land was not sold there, it was a possession". Likewise,

This is a narrative that obviously intends to give visibility to the region's infrastructural problems, or part of them, aiming for a dialogue to demand.

Common procedures of the dominant groups and the municipal public administration, which used the ``Semanário Sobralense`` to publicize their conjectures, or to carry out their defenses in favor of the increase in public financing for rural landowners in the north countryside region of the State.¹⁰

Meanwhile, the residents of the surrounding area of Sobral were also planning their future in this city, migrating in search of other announced opportunities, to include themselves in modern times with the jobs that would come with the increase in industrialization, commerce, and civil construction.

However, while these jobs did not arrive, they would combat unemployment through other possibilities which were already within their domain, such as making and cutting straw hats and bags, as in that period plastic bags or cloth hats were not used as they currently do, planting fields, raising animals, placing stalls of the most diverse types in the market or in their own homes, washing clothes or other domestic services, as we analyzed in the other chapters. This way, they arrived in Sobral asking to get a job with guarantees of rights that until then had escaped them, to study or send their children to study, to escape family dissensions and, although they do not exactly highlight it in these words, to leave the landowner domination by raising their children in a unlike the way they were created.¹¹

“THE CITY IS VERY HOSPITABLE HERE”

The migrants told us more evidence of how different sensibilities were interrelated and helped to build their spaces of sociability, work and survival in this city. And on the other, how this city was renewed not only from the point of view of urban equipment, but also from the perceptions of those who lived and still live far from its center. Let's look at Mr. Antônio Elói (2013) who arrived in Sobral in December 1978.

It was very different from the way it is today, Sobral was very good. When I arrived, I took a can from where I lived and went to get water from the top [...], there was a fountain, I went down at eight o'clock at night and there was nothing to look at us! Today you can't even leave the house, the goat wants to kill the person even though they have nothing, nothing. Today it's like this, it wasn't like that before! This Sobral was better! [...] Today it's very different, in Alto do Cristo [neighborhood], at least there's water, where I used to live there wasn't even a house, it was forest! [...]. (ELÓI, 2013).

Mr. Elói is married, then 68 years old, born in *``Sítio São João``* in the municipality of Meruoca in 1949. This gentleman lived and worked as a “farmer” in Santana do Acaraú, adjoining municipality, where he migrated at the age of 12 until his arrival to Sobral in 1978 “to look for work”, because where he lived “there wasn't any”. This is because subsistence farming work is seasonal and does not offer labor rights. In Sobral, in addition to being a “worker” he learned to work as a bricklayer and wall painter, however, he retired as a worker at the Cement Factory where he worked for 18 years.

In relation to the city experienced by migrants, there is a rhetoric that was opposed to the city reported in *``Correio da Semana``*. In all interviews, taking as a parameter

arrival any time between 1950 and 1980, the farmers attested to a Sobral that could not be confused with the current one, for them it was a non-city. And one of the highlights was the consumption of water from fountains, or directly from the Acaraú River.

The water was collected in the fountains that shaped the landscape of an urban complex that no longer exists, or it arrived directly from the Acaraú River to different heads, especially those of housewives.

Mr. Elói brings a context accompanied by nostalgia, not for the hinterland, but for the city he had known when he arrived, because “It was very different from the way it is today, Sobral was very good”. Despite the statement: “I didn't have that before! This Sobral was better”, the past representation he brings is respectively negative, as the city is not the same because currently “at Alto do Cristo there is at least water”. These aspects indicate a city that has transformed in recent years not only for the comfort of its residents, but ambiguously, for their discomfort, as it presents itself with an urban violence that this gentleman has not experienced in the past.

The city changes and alters the relationship with its residents who began to see it differently, starting to find it strange, thus altering the memory that becomes confused. Sobral is no longer the uninhabited city they knew and learned to like for the tranquility of walking through its streets at any time, nor is it the same as the fountains.

“WE DIDN’T HAVE ANY OF THAT IN OUR HOUSE”

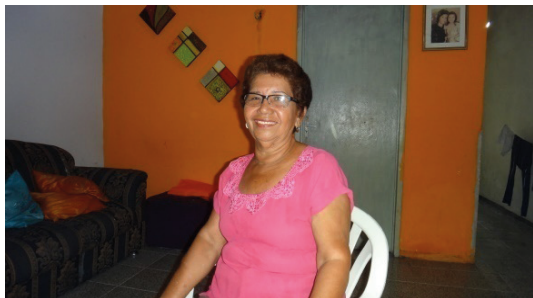


Image 1: Mistress Nésia Félix in her residence

Source: Adrião, 2018, p. 226.

At that time, forty years ago, we didn't have water in the tap, we got it from a fountain, right? Here in this neighborhood, I remember there were two fountains, [...] not every house had water in the taps, the people were all poor, how were they going to get water, right? So we got water from a fountain, when there wasn't any in the fountain, or the queue for cans was huge, right? Those cans, those buckets, we went to Rio [Acaraú], to get water on our heads, yes, we washed clothes in Rio! [...]. Today, no one can do what we used to do, right? [...] When I arrived here in Sobral, we washed clothes in Rio, we could spend the whole morning in the river washing clothes, in the afternoon you would still go, if there was no water in the pots, at that time it was pots, [...] I got tired of laying 7 water paths from here to Pros, which were called the *Torrões* [explains where it was] [...]. Two three housewives would get together and go wash clothes in the river [...]. We've had a lot of difficulty with everything, a lot, a lot! Lack of water in the tap, lack of food at home, and all of this we had to work hard, to cope, because it is [...]. (FÉLIX, 2014).

At 69 years old, widow and retired, with a sensitive and kind spirit, the type that learned to overcome problems by smiling and joking without letting herself get discouraged, this lady feels grateful for her material achievements, mainly because they are the

result of his willingness to “learn and work”. Among other activities, she learned to sew and “sewing out” took up a good part of her existence. She received us at her residence in the neighborhood where she has lived since arriving, Santa Casa, although not in the same house because at first she came as a “guest of a lady she knew” to help her with the household chores.

This lady reported her travels to other states, because her “husband was a construction manager”, a moment that she remembers with nostalgia because if it had been up to her she would not have returned to Ceará.

Regarding living in Sobral, he highlighted an issue that has become commonplace among those interviewed, comparing the difficulties that existed in the past with the present regarding water consumption, as we saw with Antonio Elói. When it came to remembering the difficulties she faced, he highlighted the consumption of water, whether for drinking or for general household expenses, which came either from fountains or directly from the Acaraú River. With regard to water consumption directly from Acaraú, the ease with which housewives went to the beach every day, even in the afternoon, can be explained by the distance or proximity they lived to the river.

The Santa Casa neighborhood where Félix lives, like other neighborhoods such as Pedrinhas, Tamarindo, Dom Expedito, where Mariana Sousa, Zenite Soares, João Emílio Vasconcelos lived, is located on the banks of this River. In the past more than today, in due to the urban changes carried out, which erased the paths that led to Rio at any time. However, reports of the use of this source correspond to other neighborhoods such as Junco, which is very far away, because the clothes washer women also used its waters for their work. And water consumption for the majority of the population came directly from it for much

of the period studied. Therefore, necessity impelled the ladies to carry out their tasks on the Acaraú River, regardless of the distance.

The photograph below from ``*Correio da Semana*`` newspaper archive shows how the population that lived near Acaraú lived with it in an imperative way. In this case, those who lived in the Dom Expedito neighborhood crossed it by canoe if they needed to head to the left side of its course, or towards the city center. And in the opposite direction, whoever needed to go to this neighborhood would need to resort to canoeists, especially in the rainy season when canoes were the only way to cross.



Image 2 Canoeists “crossing” from one bank to the other of the Acaraú River.

Source: Adrião, 2018, p. 228

One might think that for centuries canoeists persevered on the beaches of Acaraú, also composing its landscape. Although there are still people who prefer to cross the river, it does not pose any risks in the summer when its bed is uncovered, as shown below. However, we may be asked: but why this photograph and this question, if the theme was water cans on the head, queues at the fountains and the ladies’ race to the Acaraú River?

It is true, this image does not show any evidence of these activities, therefore, it does not corroborate what Félix and other women pointed out in their reports. We only got one photo from the period in question from ``*Correio da Semana*`` that confirms the reports, which is mentioned in the first topic of the chapter under analysis, when a lady can be seen walking with a bundle on her head, as we are talking about other times, people. They were not equipped with mobile phones and related technologies, nor could they hire photographers, as only 4 migrants had photos from the period.

Some interviewees recalled the queues at the fountains and the lack of water, forcing them to look for alternatives in the waterholes, lagoons or dams that made up the city’s landscape. Just as they remembered how clothes, and even their bodies and their children were sanitized in the river. In this sense, the photo we brought above only reflects the relevance of this natural heritage in the daily lives of the city’s residents.¹²

It is important to highlight, however, that the water distribution policy in the city has gradually changed, altering the habits of this population, including the desire and struggle for social inclusion. As for the Acaraú River, pollution and silting have consumed it mercilessly, like other Brazilian natural reservoirs, which can be seen without much effort in photographs like the one below, just as urbanization has advanced into the riverbed., an issue that cannot be analyzed here.

12. The hymn that celebrated the city’s 130th anniversary in 1971 says: “Sobral was born among verdant cork oaks on the left bank of the legendary Acaraú [...] in the rustle of the carnaub trees that surround you, you can hear the voice of Acaraú murmuring [...]”. (GONDIM, 1971, p.1).



Image 3: Acaraú River Bed – Sobral, July, 2016

Source: Adrião, 2018, p. 230.

The purpose of this photograph was to record a police operation that can be observed from the middle of the bridge, therefore, its capture was not intended to display the riverbed, however, through it is possible to see beyond the bed of the Acaraú, part of the left bank of the river. city discovered in the previous photo, in this last one, distinctly from the previous one, you can see the new center superimposed on the old center.

Important in this sense is that this image presents indications that the population learned to use the river, but did not learn to take care of it, even less so did the city's public and private managers. And a river that during the 20th century still served the daily lives of its residents, regardless of social class, the work of clothes washerwomen, the domestic economy and the leisure of the population, currently finds itself in this situation.

Although some attempts at revitalization and awareness could be highlighted, we will not delve into this issue. Not forgetting that the Acaraú is not a perennial river, it is even considered “the second largest dry river in the world”.¹³

And the city of mansions that crept along the riverbank, as shown in image 2, was left

13. “[...] the Acaraú River, with a length of 315 km, [...] occupies an area of the order of 14,423.00 km², which corresponds to 10% of the territory of Ceará. The Acaraú basin drains 28 (twenty-eight) municipalities [...]. (CEARÁ. 2009, p. 17).

14. “The waterhole was overflowing. The pots were full. Luzia twisted a rag from an old towel into a ring, to balance hers on her head, waiting for Terezinha to give her back the gourd with which she bathed”, From the novel *Luzia Homem* by Domingos Olímpio.

behind the new city, which, with no tradition to preserve, passed in front of it. A change that can be attested in the news from “*Correio da Semana*” newspaper, such as in Lira’s article “*A Nova Sobral de 1980*”.

Three bold initiatives completely transformed the urban part of Sobral [...]. The first was the construction of the Bus Station in Bairro Tamarindo. [...]. Against all odds, the bus terminal was built in a swampy neighborhood, where the red-light underworld lived. Once this major challenge for the city of Sobral disappears, the entire area is immediately cleaned up. Asphalted streets provide ample access to the bus station. Beautiful residences, commercial establishments, apartments are built in record time in what was once a region condemned by Public Health [...]. (LIRA, 1980, p. 2).

Part of one of the neighborhoods mentioned in this article, Tamarindo, can be seen in the photo above, and the bus station, one of the monuments celebrated by Lira, also appears in the panorama on the left: being the first one-story building with a red roof. Thus, this new Sobral forgot the vitality and usefulness of Acaraú that now reside only in memories, in literature¹⁴ and in the written memory of “*Correio da Semana*”:

One of the biggest problems in the city of Sobral, and the most important of all, is, without a doubt, water. [...] Dr. Lister Ibiapina Parente, [...]. He installed it [...] there on the river bank, along Cel Street. José Sabóia, right behind the Peri Frota warehouse, a drinking water service, hygienic, clean, perfect. There are two water intakes that supply 80,000 liters of the precious liquid per hour, taken from a deep well dug in the riverbed. There, all the carts that supply water to the city could be filled, and we, the consumers, would drink the precious lymph

without fear of it being contaminated [...]. In summer, water carriers take the liquid from open water holes in the river, on the surface of the earth, and where many people bathe late at night and early in the morning. Animals are taken to these waterholes and the donkeys and donkeys themselves, which carry the water, deposit their waste there. The majority of the population drinks water from the river [...]. (RAMOS, 1950, p.4).

This article from 1950 is emblematic of the time when the population of Sobral consumed water from holes that opened in the river, on the surface of the earth” when it was driven in “carts” and pulled by “donkeys and donkeys”, which this way reached homes without necessary health care. A period in which the fountains mentioned by migrants were not yet part of the city’s scene, when the “majority of the population”, as the author points out, used the river directly for the most diverse needs.

Corroborating this past context, the work “Luzia-Homem” when Olímpio (2003) presents evidence that the way in which the population of Sobral appropriated the waters of the Acaraú in the 1950s and 1960s in Sobral, was a long-standing lesson. and it had not changed from the second half of the 19th century to the first half of the 20th century, except perhaps for the introduction of water transport carts.

Let’s see how this writer presents this situation: “Once, while she was bathing (referring to Luzia), after filling the large pot, in the open pit in the river’s sand bed, in a place far from the paths and waters. most frequented [...]” (OLÍMPIO, 2003, p. 27).

The year in which this Olímpio scenario takes place is 1878 during the summer, a period in which it normally does not rain in the backlands of Ceará, and even during a drought that had persisted since 1977, even so, the river supplied the needs of the local population and the “retreatants”, some of the characters in Olímpio’s plot. Which leaves

us with clues that, whoever arrived in Sobral around the 1950s and 1960s, 1970s, they came across another Acaraú that served the socio-environmental customs of the time, therefore, it was not the way it is now.

Therefore, washing clothes, bathing, drinking water, giving water to the family animals, polluting the river while using its waters was part of the routine of the working population, probably regardless of their origin. This led us to conclude that these uses facilitated the stability of those who moved due to droughts, as they intended to live near the Acaraú or other water reservoirs which, as already highlighted, made up the landscape of this city.

On the other hand, efforts to resolve the problems complained of by the journalist above and highlighted in the interviewees’ narratives, despite water consumption, were procrastinated, but arrived in the city that was modernizing, as in the 1970s, we read in the *‘‘Correio da semana’’*: “Water – Fundação Sesp, a body subordinate to the Ministry of Health, has just completed the monumental work on the New Sobral Water Supply System, considered the most modern in the Northeast [...]”. (SOARES, J., 1971, p. 4).

We cannot say with certainty that the project would be able to serve the population living in the district of Sobral (that is, the municipality’s headquarters), if they requested the service, which in the 1970s totaled 58,214 residents (IBGE, 1973, p. 496).

It is interesting to understand, for the sake of illustration, why we are not going to analyze the factors that caused the population to grow and decrease, because migration alone does not explain, however, that the urban contingent residing in the seat of the municipality of Sobral from 1950 to 1970 more than doubled. in 1950 it totaled 22,328 individuals and in 1970, 58,214. Although the overall total growth did not double, from

70,011 to 102,197 residents. Meanwhile, the population of the districts was in a certain way in the opposite direction, if we stick only to the numbers, as in 1950 it totaled 41,683 and in 1970: 43,983 residents (IBGE, 1950; 1970). Although an increase is still noticeable, it is possible to consider that rural inhabitants were decreasing, as analyzed by Santos (2009).

In the weekly article, this change in the city's water service gradually stopped being a promise and reached the outskirts, although not in a satisfactory way as the migrants reported to us, especially due to the cost of installing drinking water directly in homes. In such a way, their narratives revealed the unknown city, well known to them, built by them, but without the infrastructure of the city center.

The reports brought signs of how expensive this infrastructure was, as Félix remembers above: "not every house had water in the taps, everyone was poor, how were they going to get water, right?" Therefore, this modernization of the water supply system was not within the reach of all city residents, not exactly because it could not be extended to all homes, but because its residents were not in a position to finance it.

Returning to migrants and the ways in which they experienced this context of changes in the city's urban paradigms, which grew and disrupted the spatialities created by migrants with new parameters, with new codes of conduct for everyday relationships, which in turn suggested new desires and new sensibilities.

From this perspective, we brought the contribution of Maria das Graças da Silva who presents us with her interpretation and experience regarding these circumstances:



Image 4: Maria das Graças Silva – Interior of her residence

Source: Adrião, 2018, p. 91

– I often say this: I'm happy to live, even if I'm sick, even if I'm sacrificed, and even if I suffer a little with my husband, I don't have a husband who really likes me, and I say a lot, my sister complains much of life, stop complaining, 'but because it's not you!' No, that's not why, today we fear everything in our hands, why are you crying for nothing? We have a phone! Do you want medicine? The pharmacy will drop it off, right? Do you want to take a shower? There's a bathroom that we didn't have! I would do the job, on the toilet and roll on the edge of the line, and we have all of this today, right? [...] Even when we had water here in the house that could be used to wash a cloth, the tap was there [points to the entrance of the house], the first tap that was installed was just at the front, I was working there, right?, in commerce, as I was there in 'Praça da Meruoca', my compadre who worked at SAAE, [...] my compadre friend of Sílvio, working there at SAAE, I was dying to put water in my house and I still couldn't afford it., we couldn't do it, right? So, he said: 'godmother, let's do the following, let's talk to Sílvio so you can pay for your water together, when the paper arrives, you can pay that small amount, will it work?' [...] Then I said, it will work, it will work, my friend, it will work! 'But bedpan, he can only put a tap at the entrance!' So, I agreed, I was happy, when we got to the point of having a tap in our living room, close to the first door, it was like that! That's the shortest value, right? [...]

Then, when there was this water in which we could wash a cloth, we had to squat, right? There was no sink inside the house, there was no laundry room, there was nothing like that! And today why cry? Why complain, we have a laundry room, we have a bathroom, we have a shower, right? And why do we cry so much about the life we live at an age? [...] We have to thank God, I think [...] (SILVA, M., 2014).

This 68-year-old retiree remembers that even when the water service was installed in her home, considering all the expensive and embarrassing circumstances of dealing with the lack of water on a daily basis, it was still mediated by her comrade, employee and friend, who gave her He proposed a somewhat privileged situation, in order to give him budgetary conditions for water to be brought to his home.

Therefore, it was just a tap that was located in the room closest to the street, aiming to reduce the costs of the installation, which was still expensive, but was worth it because: “when we had this water we could wash a cloth, [even though] it had to be squatting, right?”

In this sense, it can be thought that the SAAE service followed the pattern already known in the fountain queues, as the population living in distant neighborhoods who contracted this service, with this lady as a reference, did not have access to it all day long. However, when there was water in the taps, I avoided traveling to the Acaraú River to just wash some “cloths”, because the cleaning of clothes, as already mentioned, took place in this source.

It is a possible reading of this narrative, because certainly going to the river was also pleasurable, as Mistress Nésia Félix and Mistress Rosa Soares highlighted, it was not just about domestic work. Going to and staying at Acaraú beach also represented spaces for sociability, a time in which housewives and

workers shared their intimacy, their routines, in addition to getting water, cleaning their clothes, and taking a shower, a situation in which they overflowed compared to fountains, or with water regulated in pots in domestic privacy, with no place for bathing in homes.

However, it is possible to think that not all women enjoyed this routine, because they took on other daily activities, because they did not work as maids or housewives or in the laundry service, as some established themselves as traders, and Maria Silva (2014) was one of those who set up a “stand” to sell clothes in “Praça da Meruoca” in the center of Sobral and worked there until she retired, like Ms. Mariana Sousa who worked at her stand in the public market of Sobral.

This lady also highlighted other day-to-day difficulties, the risky condition in which she lived, taking us back to the previous question in her story, the reasons for her unhappy living in Sobral,¹⁵ because the exposure to which residents of the periphery were subjected was within the limits of what was bearable, socially speaking.

We believe that doing “the job on the toilet and rolling around on the edge of the line” did not mean the same in the peasant space, where these circumstances probably did not conflict with other temporalities and spatialities, as happened in the city of Sobral. In chapter 3, in which we analyze this lady’s story in more depth, she explains how childhood “friends” who were born and raised together grouped together to clean clothes, clean vegetables and support other daily situations, must not meeting at the point in question, however, it is plausible to think that this type of occurrence would not cause embarrassment as it did in the city, considering the way the city is organized, especially in the surrounding neighborhoods, where deforested streets were forming, without the forest cover that reduced the

15. See the chapter “The social and solidarity economy produced by migrant peasants” from the book “Sustainability and Social Responsibility in Focus” organized by Editora Poisson, 2019 where I analyze the “hunger economy” in which Silva places himself.

exposure of “users”, with cramped residences that shared walls and backyards, apparently indifferent to subjectivities and territorialities.

For Bonnemaïson (2002, p. 126) cited by Adrião (2018), “Territory is, firstly, a certain way of living with others [...]. Space begins outside the territory when the individual is alone, confronting, and no longer associated with places, in a relationship from which all intimacy is excluded.” In this sense, even in the city there could be sharing of daily needs in a more profound way, however, it required time to build reciprocal relationships between neighbors, as this lady tried to explain in what corresponded to her sick sister, analyzed in chapter 3.

The “edge of the line” referred to by Maria Silva (2014), is a reference to a place of common use, which in the past could have been called a dump, which was located a few dozen meters from her residence, however, comparatively close. Domestic intimacy permeated the street, shared with known and unknown people on a daily basis, and possibly throughout the day, as to go to the Acaraú River or the Sumaré and Tubiba neighborhoods, or to some rural districts, or even to municipalities located in Serra da Ibiapaba, it was necessary to cross the aforementioned line. Voluntarily as an itinerary option or involuntarily, therefore there was unavoidable traffic, in addition to the train that operated schedules on some days of the week, taking passengers to Fortaleza and other locations.

This lady today is happy for what she led us to believe, when analyzing the tangible achievements mentioned in this sequence of her narrative, with the household equipment currently at her disposal, even though she lacks health, attention from her spouse and more understanding from her sister, He reached old age satisfied, grateful for the battles he had won.

On the other hand, these changes highlight the changes in the organic life of the city due to the provision of public sanitation services such as water supply, sewage disposal, garbage collection and the disciplining of the streets that arrived with the paving, issues claimed for the periphery back in the 1980s, when according to Barroso (1983), in an article in ‘‘Correio da Semana’’, it was a problem that until then had been left in the background by municipal administrations.

[...] But it is certain that Sobral cannot wait any longer for a solution to its major problem, although its people know that the works on its sanitary sewers will require many years to be completed, even if they are protected from the danger of administrative discontinuity. (BARROSO, 1983, p. 2).

Rather, he emphasizes: ‘I am referring to the sanitary sewer works in Sobral, which are increasingly demanded, without a Mayor taking the effort to update the project of this urgent basic sanitation work.’’ (BARROSO, 1983, p. 2).

The updating and extension of water and sewage sanitation was prolonged for decades until reaching the Santa Casa neighborhood in Silva’s residence (2014), however, this did not prevent some central and even peripheral neighborhoods such as Junco from receiving these services previously, a possible issue that can also be followed by ‘‘Semanário Sobralense’’. (LIRA, 1980, p. 2).

[...] Another decisive initiative that determined the birth of a ‘New Sobral’ was the Construction of the ‘City Hall Complex, Public Market and ‘‘Avenida do Contorno’’. [...]. The New City Hall, proudly planted in what was once a part of the Junco lagoon, created conditions for the opening of new streets, led the City Hall to clean up a large part of the neighborhood, and to extend the water and sewage service to the Jarbas Passarinho 1st Grade School, electrifying the entire area, thus creating a new city. In a short time, luxurious residences appeared,

bars and restaurants appeared, causing an unprecedented flow of vehicles. [...]. (LIRA, 1980, p. 2).

Circumstances possible to perceive decades later, assuming the city as a large archive of overlapping public administrations. The areas that deserved the most attention in the past and that became privileged territories between 1960 and 1980 stand out.

SOME CONCLUSIONS

Without wanting to naturalize the issue, it is important to realize that political practices that privilege urban spaces to the detriment of others were part of the urban reforms that affected the main Brazilian cities in different periods, as Rolnik (1999) attests.

In addition to urban zoning, which was no different in Sobral, as can be seen in the article cited above, on the creation and renovation of neighborhoods, what can be observed in common in all these administrative practices is “social, spatial and racial segregation”, as Caldeira (2000, p. 211) and Nilza da Silva (2006) warn, therefore, a “control over the daily life” of poor residents, a political position

that for Resende (1996, p. 23), was part of the characteristics “of modernizations in cities”.

Regardless of public and private interests in the production of urban space, it is important to remember what seems obvious: these changes in urban infrastructure have altered sensibilities, and practices that were previously not even thought of were incorporated into the daily lives of residents, such as places to take care of the body and clothing. Thus, the possibilities that contributed to some of the interviewees migrating to Sobral, when they sought to live near the Acaraú River, were in the past. Now having running water, “electric light”, a problem that Maria Silva did not address, but her sister Maria da Conceição Aguiar did, when she recalled that: “for a long time we could not leave the house at night”, “only if we took a “lamp”.

Taking advantage of the services offered, even if they were expensive, even if they were precarious, was included as a desire in the present, transforming the future, contributing to the unhappiness highlighted upon arrival and in the first years in Sobral, particularly in the most difficult moments of adaptation, pass into the time of oblivion.

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