

The socio-environmental issue in a corner of (dis)enchantment of the urban space and Environmental Education as a way of (re)enchantment: a view of the City Park of Aracaju, Sergipe, Brazil

A problemática socioambiental em um canto de (des)(en)canto do espaço urbano e a Educação Ambiental como via de (re)encantamento: um olhar sobre o Parque da Cidade de Aracaju, Sergipe, Brasil

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ABSTRACT

This article aims to discuss the effects of the spatial and urbanistic modifications in the City Park from the reflection toward the right to the city and the geographic, historic, and educational premises around this right. The research begins with the following issue: how can Environmental Education help comprehend the city as a right and, in this perspective, contribute to facing the socio-environmental impacts resulting from the limitation of this right in the northern area of Aracaju, Sergipe? The reason and the importance of this study present itself in the fact that the *locus* is suffering from the social inequality and socio-environmental vulnerability of the city, which are crucial to the present possibilities to transform the local reality. The methodological procedures were stage delimited through the following: survey and systematization of theoretical support, and data production and analysis. The data were provided based on the "Historical Images" tool of the program *Google Earth* and then analyzed under the specialized literature. The results show the City Park as a place of disenchantment in the capital due to the restrictions of the right to the city and subjects such as the lack of government investment and environmental degradation, which leads to Environmental Education being presented as a means to awaken the (re)enchantment and care to this place and, consequently, to the appropriation of the mentioned right.

Keywords: right to the city; socio-environmental vulnerability; Sergipe.

RESUMO

Este artigo objetiva discutir os impactos das modificações espaciais e urbanísticas ocorridas no Parque da Cidade, com base na reflexão sobre o direito à cidade e nas premissas geográficas, históricas e educacionais que circundam esse direito. O estudo partiu do seguinte problema: como a educação ambiental pode contribuir para a compreensão da cidade como um direito e, nessa perspectiva, para o enfrentamento dos impactos socioambientais decorrentes da restrição desse direito na zona norte de Aracaju/SE? A justificativa e relevância do estudo apresentam-se no fato de que o *locus* pesquisado vem sofrendo com a desigualdade social e com a vulnerabilidade socioambiental presente na capital, sendo mister apresentar possibilidades para a transformação da realidade local. Os procedimentos metodológicos foram delineados em etapas, a saber: levantamento e sistematização de aporte teórico e produção e análise de dados. Os dados foram produzidos com base na ferramenta "Imagens Históricas" do programa *Google Earth* e analisados à luz da literatura especializada. Os resultados sinalizam o parque como um canto de desencanto da capital em razão da restrição do direito à cidade e de fatores decorrentes dessa restrição, como falta de investimento por parte do poder público e degradação ambiental. Isso leva a Educação Ambiental a se apresentar como uma via para o despertar do (re)encantamento e do cuidado para com esse espaço e, consequentemente, para a apropriação do direito supracitado.

Palavras-chave: direito à cidade; vulnerabilidade socioambiental; Sergipe.

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Situating the reflective field

Over time, the capital of Sergipe, Aracaju, has seen its urban space transforming and seeking to offer its residents and visitors (*en*) *chants* of beauty, comfort, and convenience, as demonstrated in a study by Silva (2019), highlighting that the aforementioned city, since the 1970s, has been spatially modified in order to serve the tourist demands that permeate the segments of business, events, beach, and cultural activities.

The marks of this transformation are quite present in the south of the city, which, since the beginning of the 1990s, has experienced the installation of the hotel chain and the urban adequacy of stretches (Silva, 2019) known as *Orla de Atalaia*, *Orla Pôr do Sol*, and, more recently, the *Orla Sul*, in the sense of expanding the tourism potential of the region. In addition, in this interstice and in this area of Aracaju, shopping malls and public parks were installed, such as *Parque Augusto Franco* (aka “*Sementeira*”) and *Parque dos Cajueiros*.

From the 2000s, it was possible to observe spatial transformations and urban adaptations also in other regions of the capital, such as in the central area, with the installation of museums (*Palácio-Museu Olímpio Campos* and *Museu da Gente Sergipana*), the opening of cultural spaces (*Centro Cultural de Aracaju* and *Memorial Zé Peixe*), and the construction of new shopping centers; in the northern part of Aracaju, there was the reopening of *Parque José Rollemberg Leite*, known as *Parque da Cidade* (City Park), which had been opened in the 1980s.

According to Silva (2019, p. 126), these spatial and urban transformations are the result of tourism plans designed by state and municipal governments throughout history, with the objective of providing “sustainable development of tourism activity and maintaining the quality of natural resources,” seeking to promote and “integrate the tourism segments of business and events, sun and beach and historical-cultural, with the priority of improving the quality of life of the local population.”

In addition to leaving marks on space, such transformations also left marks on time and memory — since each territory has its own history — and human and anthropic actions impact and modify the perception and spatiotemporal relationships of the subjects, as well as the behavioral and attitudinal directions in the daily life of the city that, once, became nationally known when it received the classification of “Brazilian capital of quality of life” and that has, in its 182.163 km², several *enchantments* to contemplate and reflect on early Aracaju and today and the unfolding of the transformations in the *modus vivendi* and *operandi* of the population of this town.

In this study, we bring the perception of corners as spaces resulting from urban interventions in the territory of Aracaju intentionally designed to beautify the city and, therefore, enchant the population through aesthetic and symbolic references that “*jump to the eyes*” of the subjects, mobilizing the desire to frequent such spaces through the awakening of feelings such as appropriation and belonging to these spaces.

Therefore, the City Park is interpreted by us as an *enchantment* of the urban space in Aracaju, since it was planned to beautify the northern part of the capital and enchant its population. However, over time, this charming corner came to appear as a *disenchantment*, given the expansion of urban prospecting toward the south, which resulted in the contempt of the park and the population of its surroundings, culminating in the restriction to beauty, leisure, and comfort of these subjects already so disenchanting by inequality.

This time, the guiding question of the research emerges: how can Environmental Education contribute to the understanding of the city as a right and, in this perspective, to face the socio-environmental impacts resulting from the restriction of this right in the northern area of Aracaju, Sergipe? In this sense, this study aims to discuss the restriction of the right to the city and the socio-environmental impacts resulting from the spatial and urban changes that took place in the northern area of Aracaju, more specifically in the area where the City Park is located, pointing to Environmental Education criticism as a means of confrontation.

The choice of the *locus* in question is justified by the fact that this spot is one of the only attractions in the capital intended for the public residing and frequenting this region that, historically, suffers from socio-environmental vulnerability and social inequality, as demonstrated by the Social Map of Aracaju, published in 2019.

The approach carried out in the study emerges from the sociological concept of the right to the city, based on the discussions of Lefebvre (2016) and it is anchored in the discussion of the socio-environmental problem reflected in the light of geographical (Braudel, 1998), historical (Certeau, 2014), and Environmental Education in its critical aspect (Leff, 2001; Layrargues and Lima, 2014), since, due to the complexity of such a problem, it is necessary to bring up interdisciplinarity between the areas of knowledge.

This study, of qualitative nature and exploratory type, was developed from methodological procedures used for such verification carried out in three stages:

- Survey and systematization of the specialized literature to characterize the *locus* of study, highlighting as theoretical contribution authors such as Braudel (1998), Araujo and Cardoso (2012), Worster (2012), Certeau (2014), and Lefebvre (2016). The criteria used for the selection of these authors are part of the dialogue between the precepts set out in these works with those that are present in critical theory applied to education and in the interstice of publications made in Brazil in the past 25 years — a period in which the related discussions on socio-environmental issues gained strength in the country after the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, held in Rio de Janeiro, in 1992 (also known as Rio-92 or Eco-92);
- Production and analysis of data from satellite images available on the internet, based on the “Historical Images” tool, a resource

available in the Google Earth program that allows the visualization of images from the past of the same place, making it possible to compare urban advances toward the study area of this article. Data analysis was carried out in the light of the grounded theory technique, conceived by B. G. Glaser and A. Strauss in the 1950s and 1960s. According to Strauss and Corbin (1997), grounded theory — as it is known in Brazil — is an analytical procedure that admits the reflection, review, and (re)construction of concepts inferred from the data emerging from the investigated reality and dialogue with the theoretical framework embodied in the researched topic;

- Interpretation of results based on specialized literature, taking into account the improvement and interconnection of predefined theoretical concepts and constructs with those emerging from data production.

That said, the text is divided into three parts. In the first one, we discuss the historicity of the City Park; in the second, we analyze the urban transformations that took place in the park and its surroundings during the past two decades; and, in the third, we discuss the role of environmental education as a strategy to face the unfolding of changes and anthropic actions in the aforementioned *locus*.

The city park in time and space: (dis)enchantment of the sergipe capital city

According to Braudel (1998), temporality and spatiality are inseparable categories of human action, since they are daily correlated in the midst of the *modus vivendi* and *operandi* of subjects recognized as historical agents. At this juncture, urban spaces assume the function of systems marked by the relationships established between people and their monetary systems, languages and dialects, behaviors, eating habits, and everything that permeates material life within the scope of what is understood by civilization (Elias, 2011).

For Braudel (1998, p. 513), “in the long term, civilization, society, the economy, the State, the hierarchies of ‘social’ values” imposed themselves on everyday life and are incorporated into space and time. Such elements constitute what the author called habitual complexity, established in mercantile sociability and, therefore, in the structure of capital, a dominant structure in which short- and medium-term events are inserted and correlated in the dynamics of daily life.

Time, then, in the light of this author’s thoughts, is configured as human action in space that passes through events with short-duration temporality, by conjunctures that conform in medium duration or in structures stuck in long duration. An example of this is the emerging world system of capital, as he asserts in his work *Reflections on history* (Braudel, 1992), in which he reflects on the duration of time.

Space, in turn, is the *locus* in which human actions take place and, in a special way, urban space, or cities. As Braudel (1998) referred in *Material Civilization, Economy and Capitalism*, they are a place of

complex temporality in which the long-term duration that reveals itself in the face of the tensions that surround human life in everyday life coexists with the short- and medium-term time duration of events and conjunctures, respectively. Furthermore, they are also the *locus* of “knowledge and practices that compose images, memories and diverse actions” (Torrão Filho, 2015, p. 1).

That said, in the face of Braudelian thinking, urban space is, then, a product of historical agents and their civilizing processes. In this condition, the events, conjunctures, and structures that make it up are the reflection of desires materialized in the form of human actions in time and space, causing physical changes that can have a short-, medium-, and long-term duration in order to satisfy the needs and pleasures of historical agents. The understanding of space is interspersed with that of place, which, in turn, refers to the category of geographical thinking in which the meanings that human beings attribute to spaces and territories are inscribed — spatial appropriations on the Earth’s surface made by human groups (Santos, 2006).

Under the auspices of industrial capitalism, “trumpeting its triumph over all adversaries and promising a ‘new world order’ of infinite accumulation of wealth” (Worster, 2012, p. 378), we were modifying nature without any kind of concern with social, economic, and ecological balance, that is, with the socio-environmental dimension. Thus, nowadays, we experience a spatial transformation marked by a complicated dialectic between human actions and the limits of space.

In the meantime, urban spaces — a product of human avidity for domination of the land and its resources — were built at the whim of historical agents without taking into account the “umbilical cord” that connects us to the environment and keeps the human species alive (Boff, 1999). Cities took on increasingly urban and planned forms under the aegis of urban rationality, becoming “machinery and hero of modernity” (Certeau, 2014, p. 161).

Indeed, monuments, constructions, suppressions of traditions, and organizational strategies with a view to constituting “universal subjects,” shaped by the civilizing process, became part of urban spaces with increasing frequency, presenting historical agents with *corners* of cities full of aesthetic beauty — which are true *enchancements* in the eyes of the rational-urbanist subject — but absent from the “ungraspable and stubborn resistances of traditions” (Certeau, 2014, p. 160), which are tacitly replaced by opaque leveling of history, in the form of standardizations that mischaracterize the specificities of the place and its territoriality.

Certeau (2014) argued that, due to ambitions and the constant search for panoptic power, cities became sick. This is an effect of reason affected by economic ideology and the search for progress guided by “microbial practices” that perish in the face of everyday regulations and illegible control tactics. Therefore, structures designed to be ascendant began to coexist with the catastrophes arising from errors and misplaced human actions. Gradually, the spots of cities begin to appear

as *(dis)enchantments* as “the full implications of our ecological dependence have not yet been fully understood by economic and political leaders, but understanding these implications is already eroding any grandiose claims of land conquest or the bluster of our invulnerability to the forces of nature” (Worster, 2012, p. 381).

In this scenario, the search for the construction of “natural” spaces with a view to integrating nature into urban spaces in order to re-integrate historical agents into the environment degraded by human actions becomes increasing in the 20th century. In many parts of the world, parks and environmental protection areas are built based on this perspective. According to Diegues (2008), these spaces began to be idealized from the perception arising from urban-industrial societies. These, when realizing the consequences of the extinction of nature to the detriment of the urbanization of spaces in people’s lives, sought to build spots for leisure and contact with wild nature at the expense of the sacrifice of traditional populations.

Temporality, in turn, did not reveal different needs in the urban space of Aracaju. In the 1970s, when the City Park was planned, the northern part of the Sergipe capital city was constituted as an industrial territory of the town, housing the industrial poles of *Confiança* and *Sergipe Têxtil* fabric factories, on the banks of *Morro do Urubu* (“Vulture Hill”), where the park was built at the end of that decade. Figure 1 illustrates the industrialization of the region.

In Figure 1, it is possible to see the factories bordered by the “*praia do Bairro Industrial*,” still suitable for fishing and bathing. In this regard, a study by Lima and Menezes (2015) on the environmental degradation of *Praia do Aracaju* portrayed the transformation of the region displayed in the image from testimonies of residents who experienced the process of pollution and degradation of the waters of

the Sergipe River and the Atlantic Rainforest, the characteristic vegetation of Morro do Urubu. The reports showed that the fabric factories dumped their waste directly into the river and around the space where they were located, such as the excerpt in which a deponent exposes a memory that is the result of what was seen daily:

Then the garbage fell into the river. That ordinary poop thing, poop water, everything was fell out in the sewer, in the pipe that went to the street. It didn't have any kind of treatment. No factory had it, neither *Confiança* nor *Serigy*. They themselves knew it was pollution and an ordinary stench (Lima and Menezes, 2015, pp. 135-136).

Araujo and Cardoso (2012) observed that, during the administration of the mayor of Aracaju João Alves Filho (1975–1979), the government began to be concerned about the situation of Morro do Urubu and its surroundings, which suffered from the risks imposed on the population by the pollution of space and the degradation of fauna and flora. Plácido (2005) stated that the initial project of the park was conceived with the perspective of reducing the environmental damage caused in space by the neglect and irresponsibility of the textile industries. In addition, using the Atlantic Rainforest as a source of livelihood and providing free leisure opportunities to the locals, who are vulnerable due to poverty, carelessness, and social inequality, will help people appreciate the northern part of the capital city.

The original design of the City Park was built by the architect Jaime Lerner’s Office (1937–2021) and had paved streets, artificial lakes, courts, soccer fields, tracks for practicing extreme sports, and living areas. The work was completed in 1979; however, the inauguration and opening to the population only took place in 1985, with a great party, when João Alves Filho was acting as governor of the state (Araujo and Cardoso, 2012).

The implementation of the City Park represented, at the time of its inauguration, an enchantment along with the possibility of recovering a space lost to industrial capital and of returning nature to the dark scenario of the smoke expelled by the chimneys of “progress” and painted by the paints of pollution. This phenomenon is in line with the thinking of Diegues (2008) when he argued that parks play a role in the recovery of “lost paradises.”

The proposal for the construction of the park, in turn, is in line with Certeau’s (2014) vision that, over time, urban spaces appear to be sick, needing solutions that envision their cure. Consequently, the cure of the population, thus translating into what, nowadays, is conceived as the quality of life.

Using the thoughts of Braudel (1998) and Harvey (2012), the spatial illness of the Morro do Urubu area is the result of the desires of the urban-industrial capital structure installed in a natural space that, in a short time, was succumbed by urbanization’s degrading resulting from unsustainable human actions practiced in the region during a century



Figure 1 – Industrial pole in the north of Aracaju on the banks of Morro do Urubu in the mid-20th century.
Source: Maynard (2015).

of textile production activities, as concluded by the fieldwork carried out by Lima and Menezes (2015).

However, the implementation of the City Park was not enough to minimize the environmental degradation of Morro do Urubu, and, in 1993, the place was transformed into an Environmental Protection Area (EPA) through Decree 13,713/1993. The purpose of this decree was to guarantee the “future well-being of the population of Aracaju, as well as the need to ensure the technical conditions indispensable for the ecological viability of Parque Governador José Rollemberg Leite” and the “protection, conservation and recovery of the last remaining Atlantic Rainforest of the perimeter of Aracaju” (Sergipe, 1993, p. 1).

But temporality — implacable for the understanding of space — once again revealed the human inability to care for the environment and the degrading potential of human actions. During the 1990s and early 2000s, EPA Morro do Urubu and the City Park suffered degradations that emerged from tensions and conflicts arising from the social vulnerability to which the local population is submitted. This situation stems from the lack of public investment in several areas of the social fabric and the opening of disorderly urban growth in the region. This fact made, for a period, the City Park a *(dis)enchantment* in Aracaju. Attempts to revitalize the park and the EPA have been made by the government since 2004, but the region’s negligence has prevented this space from becoming an attraction for the capital.

The city park and its unequal enchantments: the restriction of the right to the city

Brazilian cities have historically been spatially configured in a concentrated and excluding way. Regarding urban planning, the capitalist state, governed by the logic of profit, made the processes of urbanization occur in a disorderly way, resulting in cities that, despite being organized in a metropolitan way, generate socio-spatial exclusion and present precariousness in terms of basic public services. Therefore, quality services are found in central areas of the city and/or with greater purchasing power, causing the population living in peripheral regions, especially the working class, to be limited to spaces marked by the scarcity of urban services and collective use, thereby being deprived of the right to the town.

In today’s society, the right to the city is based on the existing contradiction between the realities of society and the facts – the generalized segregation and civilization. According to Lefebvre (2016), the right to the city is complementary to the individual rights postulated by the industrial ideology of consumer society. Thus, they comprise social rights derived from the needs for information, symbolism, imagination, and recreational activities, as well as rights arising from the anthropological needs for security and openness. This way, the author presupposes an integrated theory between city and urban society that uses the resources of science and art in which the working class can become the agent, bearer, or social support of this realization (Lefebvre, 2016).

For Harvey (2012), the right to the city is understood as a clamor and a cry for help from the oppressed and forgotten portion of the population by the public power in the fabric of a capitalized society that, in a brutal and perverse way, affects the working class (referring to Parisian society). In Brazil, it affects even more groups in a situation of socio-environmental vulnerability, historically centralized in the peripheral areas of large urban centers and characterized by the restriction of the right to the city.

This means the understanding that living with dignity in the city does not only refer to a residence but also extends to access to public transport, health, education, and quality public spaces. It is what Loboda (2016) named the right to the surroundings when dealing with public spaces in the peripheral places of the town. In this sense, the presence of the City Park in the northern part of Aracaju — where parts of the city’s lower income neighborhoods are located: Porto Dantas, Japãozinho, and Bairro Industrial (França, 2014) — symbolizes advances in the conquest of the right to the city and of the right to the surroundings of the residents of a territory marked by the industrialization workforce.

However, when observing the surroundings of the City Park, one can see the restriction of the right to the city through the lack of investment by the government and the precariousness of the basic infrastructure in the surroundings of the park and in the surrounding neighborhoods. Something that is not registered around the Sementeira and Cajueiros Parks, in the south zone of the capital city, in neighborhoods with better financial situations, where the right to the city is guaranteed to its population.

Such an observation can be seen in the comparison of Figures 2 and 3. Figure 2 records the entrance to Sementeira Park until the beginning of 2021, which has, on its entire side, been closed with custom railings, sidewalks with good infrastructure, clear signage with the name of the park, well-kept vegetation, paved streets with asphalt, and high-standard residential condominiums.

Figure 3 shows the entrance of the City Park and one of its sides, with a simple fence, the paving of the degraded street, an interrupted

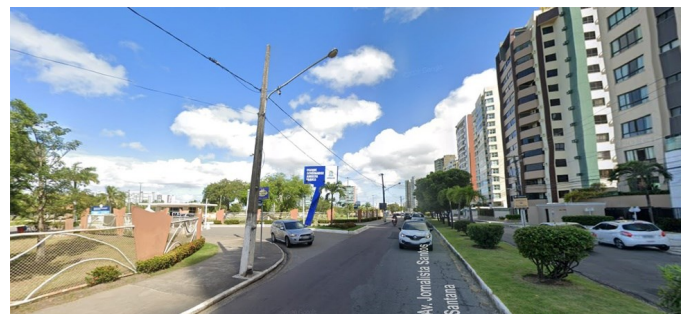


Figure 2 – Entrance and immediate surroundings of Sementeira Park, south zone of Aracaju.

Source: Google Maps (2019).

and inaccessible sidewalk, as well as low-level ground-floor residences, in addition to a few bus lines that take time to pass through the place.

With this comparison of images, a cautioned point is that public resources are invested more frequently in the richest neighborhoods of Aracaju — considered to be postcards of the city — than in the poorest neighborhoods, which become forgotten corners by the government and are unable to be part of the itinerary of the enchantments of the capital city. This is accentuated by the revitalization work of the Sementeira Park (Figure 4), which took place between 2021 and 2022, carried out by the Aracaju City Hall with an investment of more than R\$ 2.5 million financed by the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB).

This work involved the replacement of the entire fence that surrounds the park, as well as the expansion of the parking lot and remodeling of the facades of all park entrances. In addition, more vegetation and trees were planted. For the City Park, on the city hall website, there are no records of revitalization proposals for the moment, and its facade is without frequent maintenance (Figure 5).

This lack of investment results in the worsening of inequality and environmental injustice, which, according to Acselrad (2010, p.

110), concerns the “unequal exposure to risk as a result of a logic that makes the accumulation of wealth take place based on the environmental penalization of the most dispossessed.” In the case of the City Park, this penalty emerged both through environmental factors (biome degradation) and through social factors (community restriction of the right to the city), revealing the socio-environmental problem engendered in the place.

Therefore, as previously mentioned, the City Park is located within the area of the EPA Morro do Urubu, which, due to its territorial extension, faces problems with the advancement of real estate expansion. In this sense, when analyzing aerial satellite images over time, of public use and available in the computer program “Google Earth Pro,” through the “Historic Images” tool, it becomes possible to perceive the advance of human occupation in the areas surrounding the delimitation polygon of the aforementioned EPA.

These transformations can be observed from the year 2009 in Figure 6, in which the red polygonal represents the approximate delimitation of the EPA Morro do Urubu. Based on the information from the descriptive memorial of Decree nº 13.713/1993, the markings in blue refer to the ac-



Figure 3 – Entrance and immediate surroundings of the City Park, north of Aracaju.
Source: Google Maps (2019).



Figure 5 – Facade of the Aracaju City Park.
Source: Google Maps (2022b).



Figure 4 – Renovation of the facades of Sementeira Park.
Source: André Moreira (2021).

centuation of occupations in the surroundings of the EPA, characterized by subdivisions, self-constructions on the slopes of the hill, and housing projects of public initiative in the standard of the *Minha Casa Minha Vida* Program (MCMV).

As characterized by Braghini (2016), these occupations are not irregular, since the category of EPA Morro do Urubu is for sustainable use, allowing the direct use of resources and greater flexibility for the human transformations of space. However, these are occupations that do not have urban planning capable of guaranteeing the integrity of the EPA, which suffers from landfills and the lack of signage on its perimeter, as well as making it impossible for local residents to exercise the right to the city. These, despite having a natural environment around them and the leisure option that the park offers, suffer from the lack of



Figure 6 – Delimitation of EPA Morro do Urubu in 2009 and urban expansion marked in blue.

Source: Google Maps (2021) adapted by the authors.

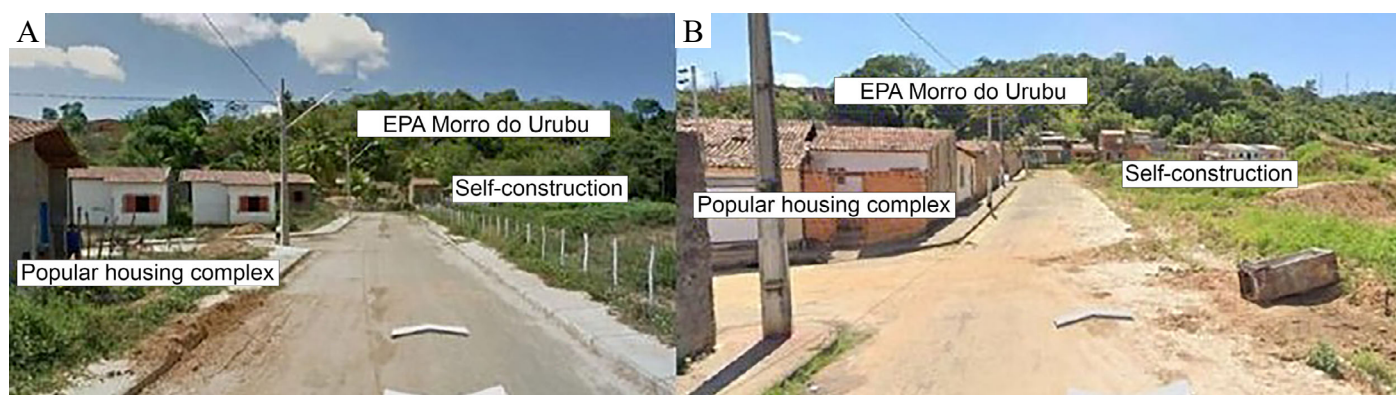


Figure 7 – Popular housing complex and self-construction on the slopes of EPA Morro do Urubu in 2011 on the left and 2019 on the right.

Source: Google Maps (2019) adapted by the authors.

basic infrastructure in the houses, streets, and surroundings, which directly interferes with the affective relationship of the community with its neighborhood.

Figure 7 (equivalent to the area signaled by the number 1 in Figure 6) shows that, in an interval of 8 years, there was an increase in self-construction on the slope of Morro do Urubu. It is also noticed that the precarious state of the infrastructure of the MCMV standard set remained, summarizing the housing as just residences and disregarding the surroundings as part of the right to live with dignity, even though the surroundings were an “important element for the effectiveness of the ‘uses’, the relationship with the other, with the community and, finally, with the city” (Braghini, 2016, p. 49).

These are questions concerning urban planning. Thus, returning to Lefebvre (2016) and his definition of urbanism, it would be divided into three strands:

- the urbanism of architects and writers, characterized by its philosophical and ideological mode;
- the urbanism of administrators linked to the state, characterized by scientific and technocratic rigor, which does not take into account the pre-existing city;

the urbanism of sales promoters, conceived and carried out for the market with a view to profit, which is the sale of a place of happiness where there are no longer citizens but consumers of space.

For the most part, the dynamics of housing projects of social interest are distinguished by their peripheral location in an environment devoid of infrastructure, without public transport, and without the necessary urban equipment. With this, the mass production of housing projects is classified in the urbanism of administrators linked to the state, generating sets of generic, peripheral, and excluding characters that follow a logic of rational, rigid, and homogeneous construction, composed of standardized residences that, for the most part, do not interact with the environment or with each other.

These are housing conditions that make it difficult to achieve social life, which is marked by the exclusion of this segment of the right to the city, resulting in a condition of isolation that contributes to the understanding of this modality of sets as state control devices (Prado Filho and Teti, 2013). Given the conditions of the complexes and subdivisions close to the City Park, it ends up becoming a point of refuge for this area, being one of the few options for walking, green areas, and leisure. However, it is pointed out that, although the park is an inviting space for the residents of its surroundings, there are still few inviting places for walkability and appropriation of public space in adjacent streets and neighborhoods to the park.

In general, there is no afforestation in the streets, quality sidewalks, and good paving, as well as quality squares in the surroundings of the park. This situation began to be improved with the creation of the *Orla do Porto Dantas* (Porto Dantas Waterfront), which is also not configured as a place of passage, but for walking and use for physical activities. There is also a lack of communication between this waterfront and the City Park, since the waterfront is on the outskirts of the EPA Morro do Urubu, but far from the park entrance.

In view of these observations and considering the studies by Certeau (2014) on transforming the human being into an active agent of history, the issue of the importance of practicing urban space is highlighted. It is from when this happens that there is the creation of identity between the person and the space, which then becomes a place through the bonds of affection. This creation of identity — which gives life to the space and transforms it into a place — is achieved in this way, through walkability, which generates an organic nature in the environment and transforms the human being into the protagonist of the city.

Walking is to have a lack of place. It is the indefinite process of being absent and looking for one's own. The wandering, multiplied and gathered by the city, makes it an immense social experience of deprivation of place — an experience, it is true, crumbled in innumerable and tiny deportations (displacements and walks), compensated by the relationships and crossings of these exoduses that intertwine, creating an urban fabric, and placed under the sign of what should be, finally, the place, but it is just a name, the City (Certeau, 2014, p. 183).

Cities are often seen only as places of passage, but they are not seen as belonging to their residents. There is no idea that the city should be appropriated; it should be transformed into a place with meaning for its inhabitants, and not just used for service activities or housing. The walker can be the transforming agent of these spaces through the creation of an identity with the place. As Certeau (2014) warned, the city is transformed for many into a desert, requiring invitations to occupy these places.

Over the years, especially since 2012, the growing urbanization around the City Park has given way to the installation of private condo-

miniums that sell the idea of living close to the City Park and the new shopping center in the Industrial District. This intensification in the urbanization process results from real estate speculation, which defines the use of land according to the profit of capital, fragmenting urban space into symbols and a field of the struggle produced by social agents that shape space (Corrêa, 1989).

Among the constructions, only one housing condominium is a public initiative (belonging to the MCMV program), with the other residential condominiums by private construction companies, including the construction of a club condominium that is being executed with financing from the *Caixa Econômica Federal* Bank, on Euclides da Cunha Avenue, which underwent duplication. Thus, there is a contrasting reality with the housing complex model illustrated in Figure 7 and with the Beatriz Nascimento urban occupation, from the Homeless Workers Movement (MTST), which is located in the vicinity of the EPA Morro do Urubu, in a movement of struggle for decent housing.

As these condominiums are quickly seen appearing in satellite images, the decrease in vegetation of the EPA Morro do Urubu is also noted, where the Atlantic Rainforest is being destroyed, giving way to buildings. In Figure 8, there is a comparison of satellite images from a few years from 2012 to 2021. The unbridled advance of civil construction toward the EPA generates environmental damage and favors the gentrification process, moving toward the restriction of the right to the city and the expulsion of the poor population in the vicinity of the new private residential condominiums.

From an environmental point of view, the advance of deforestation recorded in Figure 8 impacts the quality of life of the Aracaju population as air quality decreases, contributes to increased thermal sensation, puts biotic ecosystems present in the Atlantic Rainforest at risk, and undermines the environmental memory of this corner of the city that houses the last remnant of this vegetation in the Sergipe capital city. As a result of this situation and the gentrification process, there is a worsening of the socio-environmental problems, with an increase in slums and criminality, illegal settlements, atmospheric pollution, degradation of groundwater by the release of sewage into the environment, and creation of dumps (Araújo and Cardoso, 2012).

With the advance of the construction industry in the EPA region, new historical agents arrive to occupy the space, and with it, the aggravation of environmental oppression based on the naturalization of ways of life that break the relationship between human beings and nature, placing this subject as an anthropocentric being and, as such, a tradition devastator in favor of rationalizing the environment for the benefit of profit; hierarchy of value between produced and natural goods; homogenizer of violent anthropic actions and conflicts with the environment and with people; silencer of the oppressed; and propagator of the idea of false progress based on economic development based on expropriation and exploitation (Salgado et al., 2019).

In the EPA Morro do Urubu, this environmental oppression was legitimized by the government, which did not establish the site as of ecological interest in the Master Plan of the city of Aracaju in 2000 for the reason that this conservation area is managed by the State

Government (Santos et al., 2013), which, in turn, invests few resources in the recovery of the biotic conditions of the Atlantic Rainforest (Araujo and Cardoso, 2012). Furthermore, both powers do not invest in the quality of life of the surrounding residents, which, as shown by



Figure 8 – Transformations of EPA Morro do Urubu over the years, aerial view.
Source: Google Maps (2022a) adapted by the authors.

the social map of Aracaju, is home to the portion of the population that faces extreme poverty and inequality more critically. According to the document:

In addition to the poverty condition derived from low incomes, part of these communities suffer from socio-environmental problems, mainly due to the geographical characteristics of these territories. These problems are related to the deficiency in basic sanitation, which ranges from rainwater drainage and irregular sanitary sewage to inadequate disposal of solid waste. The zones of poverty, located in the neighborhoods of Porto Dantas, Japanzinho and Santa Maria, are points of extreme social vulnerability, with families living in precarious conditions, marked by high rates of illiteracy and low education, which make it difficult to access the formal job market, compromise social relations in the territory and relegate its population to precarious and even degrading forms of employment (Aracaju, 2019, p. 9).

Based on this context, the City Park ends up being subjugated by the Sergipe population as a *(dis)enchantment* and, consequently, fails to attract tourists and regular users, weakening the possibilities of knowing the history of a part of the capital city, of regaining consciousness and environmental awareness in relation to the Atlantic Rainforest, and of caring for the environment and reflection on the urban growth of the region, something that is only possible through Environmental Education.

In this context, it is observed that there are no institutional initiatives for educational actions in the park — which even has adequate infrastructure for this — neither by the State Government nor by the City Hall. This time, the development of these actions ends up being the responsibility of researchers, who, in the current Brazilian scenario of cuts in investment in education through the Federal Government, have been less able to implement projects and extension actions with a view to promoting care environment in the light of training processes.

Environmental education as a way of *(re)enchantment* of the city park

Environmental Education, when understood as a dimension of any and all educational processes, also assumes the condition of struggle and resistance against inequality and environmental injustice present in the historical constitution of peoples and their occupation of spaces over time, because the core of its essence is centered on criticality and emancipation as ways to face environmental oppression through collective engagement mobilized by the awakening of the desire to defend and care for the environment.

In the studied context, the socio-environmental problem becomes even more serious because there is no feeling of belonging among the surrounding residents to the region (who value the

spaces present in the south of the capital city) nor mobilization for local improvement and environmental quality, since the space in question is conceived by these subjects as a source of expropriation, as shown in a research by Araujo and Cardoso (2012). This demobilization is caused by the invisibility of the City Park and EPA Morro do Urubu faces of the government and its agents, thus suffering the greatest environmental impacts arising from disorderly urban growth and the gentrification process, as well as the silencing of sectors of society in relation to this area of Aracaju, such as the media and the school, which continue to reproduce naive and re-productive discourses and actions related to the environment and Environmental Education.

Under the aegis of the critical aspect, Environmental Education does not focus on specific actions but a continuous work that reflects time and space, the interrelationships between human beings and nature in history, and the complexity of the developments of the *modus vivendi* and *operandi* of the agents' historical and anthropic in the lives of past, present, and future generations (Leff, 2001). Therefore, the implementation of a training process focused on Environmental Education in the City Park can bring possibilities for the *(re)enchantment* of the Aracaju population in relation to this corner that once provided the unveiling of the northern zone to the rest of the city.

It is a *(re)enchantment* that goes beyond the unveiling of the beauty and ecological potential of the park and the EPA, as Environmental Education does not only permeate the attributes of fauna and flora and the conservationist (Layrargues and Lima, 2014) perspective of human speech and action but focuses on strengthening the identity and tradition of peoples with the aim of getting them to know, understand, and interpret environmental oppression and the reasons that culminate in its perpetuation. In this regard, Salgado et al. (2019, p. 598) argued that Environmental Education stands for denouncing and fighting against "territorial control and colonial-metropolis subordination relations, it endures through the establishment of a pattern of global power rooted in the creation of racialized identities."

In this sense, the implementation of Environmental Education in the City Park and EPA Morro do Urubu may awaken the *(re)enchantment* not only for space but also for life, after all, as argued by Salgado et al. (2019), as it unfolds, the population understands the environmental oppression experienced in silence by the oppressed and neglected by the public power, co-opted by hegemonic developmental projects focused on profit — such as the expansion of civil construction and unplanned environmental urbanism — awakening insubordination to the oppressive world-system through the instigation and development of belonging, engagement, and collective mobilization in the struggle for social justice that brings the quality of life and meaning to living.

The publication by Araujo and Cardoso (2012) pointed out strategies through which this Environmental Education defended here can be developed with residents around the EPA and with park visitors. In the institutional repository of the Universidade Federal do Sergipe (UFS), there are many productions that indicate this possibility, as well as in Sergipe society, there are many agents willing to act and develop critical environmental educational actions, but there is a lack of sensitivity and mobilization among the subjects of the social fabric.

Environmental Education, in this perspective, has the potential to promote the understanding of the reality experienced by the subjects living in the surroundings of the City Park and its visitors in a complex way, with the aim of unveiling the condition of environmental oppression emerging in this place, as well as the emancipation awareness of the subjects in facing the socio-environmental impacts present in the EPA Morro do Urubu.

Hence, there is a need to understand Environmental Education also in terms of community-based education. According to Camargo (2017), community-based Environmental Education is a way of understanding socio-environmental problems based on reality and taking into account six principles:

- 1) the Latin American geopolitical context;
- 2) the legacy of social struggles in Latin America as a political-theoretical-methodological basis for thinking about a non-North Eurocentric environmental education;
- 3) life stories, oral memory, popular culture and local knowledge as structuring elements of educational proposals, as well as the vision of an environmental education capable of helping to protect the intangible heritage of communities;
- 4) the perspectives of decoloniality, interculturality and ecology of knowledge as structuring axes;
- 5) a conception of critical environmental education articulated with popular education, through the use of participatory methodologies;
- 6) the vision of environmental education as a popular resource management tool (Camargo, 2017, pp. 88-89).

From these referrals, it becomes possible to awaken and *disinvisibilize* an unconscious, insensitive, and demobilized society in relation to the restriction of the right to the city and dignity, to environmental inequality and injustice, and to socio-environmental problems due to lack of training or as a result of inadequate training processes. Such processes, instead of contributing to solving this problem, act in favor of its maintenance and aggravation under the co-option of the environmental struggle by economic interests based on the production of profit by the unsustainable exploitation of the environment and its resources that aggravates the degradation of the planet and social inequality and all the ills it produces.

With the development of Environmental Education activities in the City Park, it would be possible, therefore, to *(re)enchant* the community living in the surroundings of EPA Morro do Urubu and frequenting its dependencies through the presentation of the history of the place, knowledge of the right to the city, and recognition of the contribution of this spot to the city of Aracaju. These actions can contribute to the formation of sensitized subjects committed to the rescue of the feeling of belonging undermined in time and space and engaged with the struggle from the unveiling of the socio-environmental problem and the perception that we are historical agents capable of re-signifying the impacts caused by changes over time.

However, it remains for us to question: how long will we continue to accept the injustice and social inequality present in the park's history and at present time as natural? How long will we look disenchanting at this *charming corner* of the capital city?

The daily struggle for the *(re)enchantment* of the park and of life is engendered by conflicts within the naturalization of oppression marked by human agency in time and space, but let us remember the verses of Bertold Brecht, in *Praise of Dialectics*, to continue finding the necessary forces and not to cool down facing the daily *(dis)enchantments* emerging in this complex system in which we live and which we call the environment: "On whom does oppression continue? On us / On whom it depends that it ends? / Also on us / What is crushed must rise! / What is lost, fight! / What knows what has been reached, that there is what holds it / And it will never be: even today/ Because losers today become winners tomorrow."

Possibilities of *(re)enchantment*

The spatial and urban changes in Aracaju enabled the building of enchantments in the Sergipe capital city that took a *charming corner* to the north zone through the City Park (*Parque da Cidade*), located in *Morro do Urubu*, breaking with the industrial sovereignty that prevailed in this area and bringing to the surrounding residents the possibility of comfort and quality of life in a space that was already in a situation of socio-environmental degradation, as well as the possibility of exercising the right to the city, conferred by a place of leisure and consequent improvements in basic infrastructure aimed at a public that, historically, faces social inequality.

From this perspective, through Environmental Education, this *disenchanted corner* of the capital city of Sergipe can return to being a place of enchantment as the implementation of this training process encompasses, with residents of the surroundings and regular visitors, the awakening of the feeling of belonging emerging from the dialogue carried out with the history of the park and with the explanation of the reasons that led the space to be transformed into an area of environmental preservation, which is articulated with the public power and engaged with the constant review of the Master Plan for Urban Development of Aracaju.

Furthermore, the implementation of Environmental Education in accordance with the highlighted aspect also contributes to the resignification and transformation of the vision constituted by the park from the unveiling of elements, such as the mediation of conflicts between humans and others and the relationship with non-alive organisms; perception of social, economic, and cultural interrelationships existing in the environment; attitudinal changes; emancipatory training that envisages the communion between society and the environment; and the strengthening

of contextualized, multidimensional collective and civilly organized actions.

We know, however, that it is not an easy task, nor an immediate result, nor capable of being developed without the involvement of subjects from the different fields that make up the society, but we assert that it is possible and feasible (see publication by Araujo and Cardoso, 2012) and that it is urgent, since the northern part of Aracaju urges initiatives of *(re)enchantment* and unrestricted right to the city.

Contribution of authors:

MODESTO, E. A.: Conceptualization; Formal analysis; Investigation; Resources; Writing — original draft; Writing — review & editing. MODESTO, M. A.: Conceptualization; Formal analysis; Investigation; Resources; Writing — original draft; Writing — review & editing.

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