Green gentrification, green segregation and the right to nature in Brazilian cities

Wendel Henrique Baumgartner
Federal University of Bahia, Department of Geography, Salvador, Brazil
E-mail: wendel_henrique@hotmail.com
https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Wendel_Henrique_Baumgartner
https://www.linkedin.com/in/wendel-h-42827014b/

Future publications:
La gentrificación verde y el derecho a la naturaleza en la ciudad. Apropiación de la naturaleza en la producción capitalista del espacio urbano. Revista Ciudades, Estados y Política.
A dialectical discussion about the Parque Augusta (São Paulo/Brazil): from the struggles of a social movement to its appropriation in the real estate market and the right to nature in the city. Sustainability.
Several actions to increase natural areas in cities
Climate Change Adaptation
Green and resilient cities
Strategies: green-blue infrastructures, greening plans, ecosystem services, nature-based solutions (NBS), Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and so on….

São Paulo
12.3 million inhab. - 21.6 million Metropolitan Area*
2019 average income: R$ 1,452 (US$ 253.8) monthly**
In favelas/vulnerable communities: R$ 404.1 (US$ 70.5) monthly**

Salvador da Bahia
2.8 million inhab. - 3.8 million Metropolitan Area*
2019 average income R$ 912.81 (US$ 159.72) monthly*
Income for poorest: R$ 129 (US$ 22.57) monthly*
41.83% of houses are in slums/vulnerable communities*

*Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE)
** SEADE Foundation
Images: São Paulo & Salvador (Municipalities)
The critical analysis is not against greening or sustainable urban planning projects, or the use of NBS or SDGs. Regrettably and unintentionally, these ideas are (re)producing and (re)affirming social and territorial problems in the access to nature in the city.

Natural amenities’ have been appropriated by the real estate market to enhance premiums and values of properties.

Contradicting several aspects of spatial justice, resulting in an uneven right to nature in the city (Henrique, 2009; Anderson et al, 2019)

We will discuss 2 processes of nature production and appropriation:

1. Nature performing as a bait to attract higher income inhabitants to an area = Green Gentrification (Gould & Lewis, 2017)
2. Nature becoming a green barrier to separate economically/socially distinct neighborhoods = Green segregation (Venter et al, 2020)
Green Gentrification

Parque/Park Augusta
In general, the average price for square meters in the neighborhood where the park is increased from R$ 5,522* (2018) to R$ 8,817 (2021).

In the same period, the accumulated inflation was 11.09%, meaning that the price per m² soared 143.73% above inflation.

The valorization in new developments in the perimeter of the park is much higher.

3 new housing buildings in front of the new park.

Average income in the city: R$ 1,452 (monthly)

*Brazilian reais (BRL/R$) suffered a major devaluation in the past years (30% just in 2020). Since the prices in the local market are in BRL, we are presenting the value in the local currency. The conversion rate to American dollars was US$ 1/R$ 3.93 (August/2018) and US$1/R$ 5.76 (27 March 2021).

Exclusionary Displacement (Marcuse, 1985)
Exclusion from the possibility to live there (Dooling, 2009)

Olhar Augusta
unit 77 m² = R$ 11,558.44 m²
with 66 m² = R$ 12,779.19 m²

You, Central Park
units 24 m² = R$ 15,208.33 m²
units 37 m² = R$ 16,101.18 m²
units 57 m² = R$ 15,870.17 m².

These values represent almost a 100% valorization above the average prices in the region (R$ 8,817 m²).

Cadoro
unit 158 m² = R$ 11,958.81 m²


Images: Author, December/2020
Green Segregation  Parque/Park Paraisópolis
Contact zone between Paraisópolis (the second biggest slum + housing projects = 100,000 inhab.) and Morumbi/Vila Vitória Regia (one of the richest neighborhood in the city)

Morumbi is a very green area, with good access to urban infrastructure and services
Paraisópolis has almost no green or open space and have huge problems due to the lack of basic infrastructures and urban services

Project Parque/Park Paraisópolis: a green area of 70,000 m² Walled and gated, high controlled
2 Entrances: Entrada 1 (Paraisopolis) – Entrada 2 (Vila Vitória Régia)

The conflict
The neighbor’s association of Morumbi wants to close Entrance 2 (Entrada 2), limit the opening times of the park and restrict its use, forbidding picnics, barbecues and pets and restrict the access for people with questionable moral values (?). They want the park as a green barrier, segregating high income neighborhood. Without Entrance 2, the people from Paraisópolis cannot cross it to use the public services on the other side.

So far, social movements managed to keep Entrance 2 opened in the project and are denouncing the acts of segregation, supremacy and racism in the use of the park.
Conclusions

*Green gentrification:* Punctual

*Green segregation:* More visible and spread in and other Brazilian cities (i.e. Parque da Cidade Salvador, Bahia – image on the right)

Greening projects are important to produce a resilient city adapted to climate change. However, in Brazil is important to critically analyze these projects to:

- guarantee that all citizens, despite income or neighborhood have access to nature in the city.
- avoid construction of walls in order to ‘protect’ nature and segregate poor, marginalized and vulnerable communities
- ensure social and spatial justice, controlling rental and land prices control, promoting affordable housing, projects
- universalize the right to nature in the city